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May 21, 1985 # 260

RAM

COMMODORES KILLING JOKE STRANGLERS
POWER STATION NIK KERSHAW
MILKY BAR KIDS JUST A DRUMMER TINY TOWN
MOODISTS THE MOFFS
SINGLES Exhumed by IGNATIUS JONES
LIVE — Queen, Killing Joke, Saints
TALKING HEADS — The Movie

PIC: KEVIN CUMMINS

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RAM letters

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THE STATIC ENTERTAINMENT SYNDROME

What is happening at the Sydney entertainment Centre? Students of Music & Associated Behavioural Sciences (MABS) will no doubt have noticed the strange phenomena which have enveloped one of Sydney's few remaining music shrines. I cite as an example the most recent case history, that of Queen's peformance on April 25. From my (disad)vantage point, to the left of the stage, I was (incredibly) able to hear the band *and* see most of them. The pleasurable sensation of vibrations of the musical kind entering my ears and subsequently permeating my brain continued through my nerve endings conveniently located in my hands and feet. This is known to the less scientific as the urge to dance. A couple of my friends were also afflicted with the same disease. In an attempt to administer the only proven cure, we were asked to "sit down" by some unsympathetic wretches.

Temporarily, we sat down at the request of one guy (jeez, his girlfriend was BIG!!) and planned out our next move. Whilst in this positon, I happened to glance down into the ground level section, and noticed to my disbelief that two thirds of them were... sitting down! Oh my gosh, I thought, it wasn't a smoke machine down there, Jim Jones's uncle was down there dropping cyanide pills into acid. Just as I was about to raise the alarm, as if to confirm the existence of reincarnation, a member of the mob moved! Then, to my immense relief, I realised my fears were unfounded as the members of this elite deigned to lift their no-doubt portly backsides from their no-doubt comfortable seats, and for what? *Radio Ga Ga!?*

But still, let's not get into personal song preference — many of those people were probably boring and non-creative and thus well justified in their actions. The point of the matter is, "What the hell is going on?" Is it now "not cool" to dance? Or do we need the media to tell us how good someone is before we move (e.g. Wham, the Boss etc.). I'm not a Queen fan with sour grapes — having seen about 10 concerts at the SEC in the last 12 months, I've noticed little desire to participate and enjoy concerts. Yet, just a few years ago, everyone was whingeing about the upstairs of the Capitol because they couldn't dance — the best example in my mind being the Skyhooks reformation show.

I acknowledge that there are concerts that are just for watching, but I don't think people realise just how easy it is for a band to be inspired by a moving audience. With 12,000 people under one roof, the place should be shaking. If people just want to watch, and listen from the comfort of a chair, there are plenty of videos and live records available — don't waste valuable space.

So, come on, all you AIDs (An Indifference to Dance) sufferers, there is a cure. Get off your backsides and get into it!

D. Plant
Leonay NSW

P.S. What about all the fans at SEC gigs getting a fair deal? The video screens should be in use for all patrons with a less than perfect vantage point. Remember, generally, we all pay the same price, and generally, it's not cheap...

It's a clear-cut case of 'Cattle Can't Dance', despite all those prods hanging on the walls?!

THE GURU HAS (NOW) SPOKEN...)

I was amused to read Jeremy Bender's story about Sydney band Spy Vs Spy (RAM 259, May 7, 1985) in which the Hoodoo Gurus (collectively) are quoted by Michael Weily as having said: "You need an image. You've gotta do this. You've gotta do that." We never said it, so Michael Weily couldn't have heard it.

From the tone of his 'quote' it is obvious that Michael was AT BEST paraphrasing something we may have said somewhere, sometime (though I can't imagine where or why), and AT WORST (and far more likely) it was his own invention, and his attributing it to us is an insult. Your writer should not have lent authenticity to such an ill-considered statement by using quotation marks, and I hope he will be more objective towards the substance of his interviews in future.

Personally, I think the quote sounds more like something their manager would have said to persuade them to wear those silly raincoats for their photo sesion — and you CAN quote me on that!

Dave Faulkner,
Hoodoo Gurus

Nothing' silly about plastic dinosaurs and birdnest hairdos, huh Dave?

SHORT BACK ASIDES 1

Somebody should remove Lynden Barber's hiatus hernia.

Pike Woff
(Order of Sun-Moon-Woff)
Sydney, NSW

Actually, he does get very strenuous on his days off. . .

SHORT BACK ASIDES II

Mr Turbot...So Phil Collins has a quick tongue, does he? It "worked best in lightning exchanges with audience catcalls", did it? I saw P.C. at the Melbourne Swimming Pool last week and thought exactly the same thing when he shot out "Yeah, I can remember my first beer too!" As quick as you like! Surprise, surprise! Could it be that P.C.'s "naturally easy wit" is little more than rehearsed dribble?

Despite this, I agree it was a great concert. As to P.C. once being dubbed the ugliest man in rock, where was Joe Jackson at the time?

No more questions.

K. Thomas
Brighton, Vic.

Yeah, people do tend towards the predictable in Melbourne. . . (joke!)

BRUCE, BYRNES & BLOODYMINDEDNESS

Congratulations to Terry Byrnes for his entry in this year's Jon Landau Memorial Hype Award, printed in RAM issue #257. Disguised as a review of Bruce Springsteen's first Sydney concert, Byrnes reached new heights of pretentious drivel with references to Nikos Kazantzakis, T.S. Eliot and Jean-Paul Sartre, not to mention the florid descriptions ("the dark tornado of *Badlands*"?).

Regrettably, he has spoilt his entry for the abovementioned award by accurately describing the highlight of the show — the extended version of *Racing In The Street,* with its spoken introduction and climactic fade-out featuring the superb playing of Roy Bittan.

For those who didn't see Springsteen, please disregard Byrnes' outrageous self-indulgence and read instead the excellent article by Richard Guilliatt in the Melbourne *Age* (28th March, 1985), which really captures and records the feel of Springsteen and the superb E Street Band. While I have become resigned to the need of certain journalists to become carried away at the expense of accuracy and keeping on the topic, it can only be hoped that similar excesses are curbed by RAM — especially since your much-needed change of editor recently.

I suggest you send Terry Byrnes to review Iron Maiden's Mick Fleetwood's shows, where there will be little room for artistic statements; he'll only be able to review the music and the musicians!

Wayne
Darlington County, ACT.

P.S. In your letters column, Michael Finn was asking where he could get a copy of Ariel's first great album — there are plenty in the second hand shops in Sydney. But, can you tell me where to get Russell Morris's *Bloodstone* album... it seems to be regrettably completely extinct.

We keep forgetting that Brooce also appeals to the commoner in us all... why don't you review Iron Maiden?

IF WELLER IS GOD, THEN WHO'S J.C.?

Dear Jon Casimir,

I wasn't overly impressed with your review of the Council Collective single in #258 of RAM. But then I think it's more your problem rather than mine, mainly that you're fuckin' idiot. Your first mistake (after being born of course) was to paint the picture that Mr Weller had been sitting around blindly ignoring the miners' plight (which was pretty hard to do as the miners took up about 90% of the viewing time on all news and current affairs programs in England during the strike), when suddenly — after another concerned band decided to do something about it — he saw a few bucks in it and decided to get his two bobs' worth.

In your infinite wisdom you think it interesting to note that the strike had been going on for ten or eleven months before "the music industry deigned to notice it". Maybe Mr Weller waited so long to try and avoid being accused of "jumping on the bandwagon", as you have done. Anyway, how do you know he hadn't previously done something for the miners in other ways? I mean, not all of us can record a single for every issue we feel strongly about.

But more to the point, it's lucky for the apathetic shits (that most of us are, me included) that there are some people about who will get off their bums and say what they feel, not what reviewers like you want to hear, or even in some cases what *we* want to hear because it's nicer to believe in a "nice" world (even you must admit that at times, it's hard to come to grips with some of the JAM's songs, mainly because they're true); and as for what you said about everything Mr Weller has done in the last two years lacking passion and warmth, all I can say is "Are you made of ice?"

I think it rather fitting to end with these prophetic words: "I don't give two fucks about your review."

Greta McDonald
Baulkham Hills NSW

In your case, possibly more energy involved in writing this reactionary little screed?

Transit Lounge

PEOPLE, EVENTS, THINGS ON THE MOVE

PG keeps the Swampies at bay (Pic: Tasso Taraboulsi)

NDP BREAKAWAY GATHERS STRENGTH

After a heavy week spent deflecting media flak over the cleaving of the Nuclear Disarmament Party, Peter Garrett said he and fellow NDP dissenters looked forward to reconsolidating under a new charter, in a recent phone interview.

"It's going to have a positive result, so I'm feeling good about it," said Garrett of the tumultuous events that followed a mass walkout at the NDP's first national conference late last month. Garrett, along with fellow NSW Senate candidate Gillian Fisher, WA Senator-elect Jo Vallentine and former ALP Senator Jean Melzer, is part of a sizeable breakaway group formed in protest against the steady weighting of the NDP by members of the leftist Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

"We detected contrary politics and a nasty weakening of the anti-nuclear position within the NDP," Garrett revealed, "and it made us wonder who was responsible. It's a case on one level of the 'Swampies' (SWP) and their mates engaging in some sort of unholy alliance with the anarchist greens."

The breakaway organisation will provide an alternative rallying point for convenors of the anti-nuclear movement, and looks certain to attract further support outside NSW via proscripton motions.

"Getting a new name and focus point is what's happening now," said Garrett. "We're going to work towards forming an organisation that goes on from where the NDP *was*, and it'll mature in time. I certainly won't be the leader, spokesperson or chairman; I'll be saving that till I'm on stage talking to audiences at the Glastonbury (England) CND concert in June."

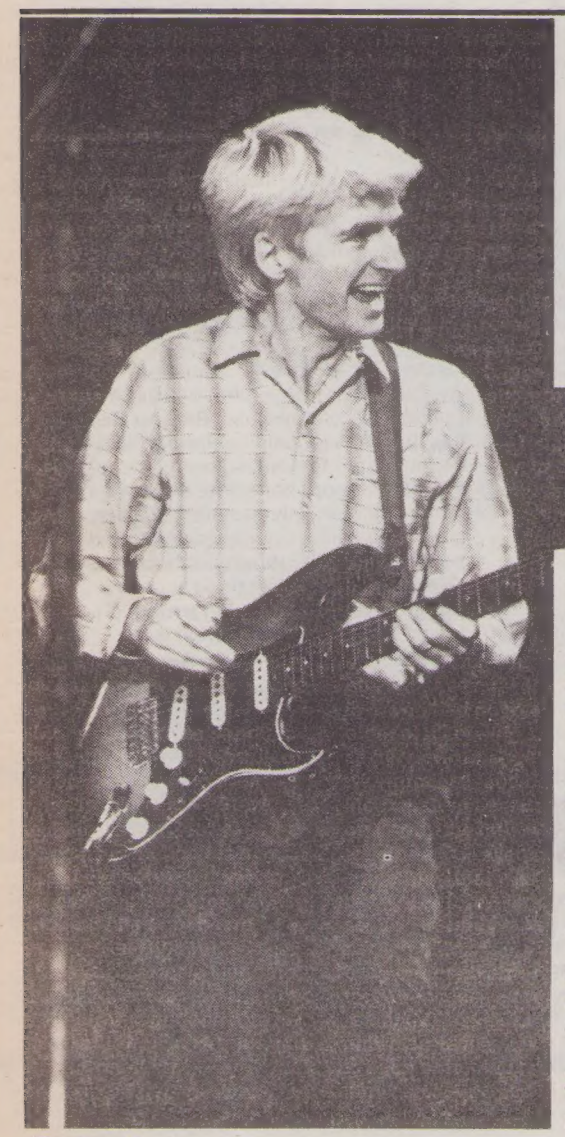
TOURS — Is This Saturation? — TOURS

With certain advertised overseas tours moving minimal pre-sales of late, one can only attribute what appears to be a definite slump in the concert market to oversaturation during the year so far. Since January, no less than 34 extra-local acts have visited these shores with wildly varying levels of success.

Has the average punter's appetite become jaded? Do their hip pockets hurt too much? Is there an excess of mediocrity flooding our way? Who knows? With the approaching winter and Sydney's fast-growing reputation as the wettest city on earth, we're starting to encounter a drop-off in tour announcements. Would that they were spread a little more evenly throughout the year — an impossible utopia, unfortunately.

Still, MEATLOAF's headed our way later this month, and he's big enough for most of what we've already seen this year. . . Someone breathed a rumour about the COCTEAU TWINS for August, though we can't quite see it on their current level of promotion over here. GENERAL PUBLIC have been forced to cancel owing to a jump-forward in recording plans, whilst SWEET's pub-and-club curiosity show has been postponed till June. There's also some doubt about PAUL YOUNG, though at press time it was merely a matter of confirmation.

Meathead...er, Loaf (Pic: SR/LFI)



(Pic: Bob King)

Stephen Cummings broke a six-month performance drought last weekend with two well-attended shows at The Club in Melbourne. Sitting in on keyboards was none other than ex Model **Andrew Duffield,** along with a 19-year-old wiz kid bassplayer and the rest of Cummings' usual crew. So what's he been up to in the meantime? Apart from recording a new single and album with producer Alan Mansfield (from Dragon), Cummings has been collaborating with ex Dugites keyboardist **Peter Crosbie** on an electronic pop score for the acclaimed Australian Dance Theatre's upcoming electro-ballet production, **High Flyers** — debuting in Adelaide next month.

As well as this project, Cummings has been further indulging his penchant for cabaret musicals with a thing called *Lovetown* — a slightly bent performance piece set aboard a train en route from Melbourne to Sydney. Described as a "1940s Human League/Las Vegas hybrid", submissions are currently under draft for the funding and further development of the piece. Meanwhile, expect the new single from Cummings around July with the LP to follow a month later. . .

MEET THE MULLANES (Finn's New Family)

"It's an old Irish family name," says *Neil Finn* of his new band, the Mullanes. "I think they were a bunch of 18th century smugglers. . . We just liked the sound of it."

The 'we' Neil refers to also includes former Split Enz compadre, Paul Hester (on drums), ex Reel Craig Hooper and bassist Nick Seymour (last seen with Melbourne's now defunct Plays With Marionettes). Rather than burst forth in a blaze of hype and hard-sell, they've opted to introduce themselves as the Mullanes on a low-key pub tour traversing four states later this month.

Despite Hooper's pedigree as a keyboardist (he guested with the Church on synths last year), this is a very much a two-guitar lineup with Finn and Hooper sharing fretboard duties. "Neither Craig nor I are particularly into guitar solos," says Neil, "but we'll still be letting it rip. We've found there's very little room for keyboards, anyway."

Groundwork for the Mullanes was laid up to six months before the Enz finally folded up the tent, though the lineup wasn't completed till February. "The minute we came off the *Enz With A Bang* tour, Paul and I got stuck into writing and demoing songs," says Neil. "We auditioned people before going overseas in February, found Craig and Nick and said: 'OK — you're in the band; see you in a month!'"

Since then, it's been all frantic rehearsal in preparation for an equally frantic tour. The Mullanes will stick to a gruelling six-nights-a-week schedule beginning in NSW on May 21, then it's into the studio following a short break around July. An album is planned, with an overseas release deal likely — various producers are currently under consideration.

"We did want to record first," concedes Neil, "but we thought it'd be better just to get out and get a reaction. It's been little more than a month's rehearsal, but it's happening! Though it's gonna be a pretty demanding schedule, I'm really looking forward to it — must be the masochist in me."

Weller & Co. Pedal Into Metal Shock. . . Ah, behind the Iron Curtain that is, to do their next video in *Poland*, of all places. And the song (the new **Style Council** single) is called *Walls Come Tumbling Down*, from the upcoming new LP. Punishing puns, wot? Especially when the album track listing includes such tasty cuts as *Bloodsports. . .*which is actually a protest song with royalties donated by Weller to the 'Hunt Saboteurs Defence Fund'. Whether they'll find any redcoats in Poland is open to wonder, but then it *is* the first time anyone's shot a clip behind the Curtain, as it were. . . There they go, busting the barriers of fashion yet again. The album's called *Our Favourite Shop*, due out at the end of the month. Is there a King's Road in Warsaw?

The ever-enigmatic **Eno,** fresh from a production embalming of Scott Walker, has announced his next project as a "solo straight rock album". . . Guess U2 infiltrated his sensibilities more than he bargained for, though he hasn't bought the habit just yet. .

Speaking of habit-forming accidents, **Jerry Lee Lewis** almost arranged his last grand stage exit recently after quaffing a vat too many whiskey sours. . . seems the legendary Killer fell down a complete set of stairs sidestage after a show in Ireland last month. Next he'il be falling into swimming pools! Late news to hand tells of Jerry Lee's hospitalisation for severe stomach ulcers — must be starting to worry. . .

It appears the metaphorical bad seeds are sown against **Nick Cave** at the moment, as he reels from a spate of *backlashus collectivus* courtesy of the ever-wormturning British press. Recently described in a live review as "an ugly man with a lot of black hair rolling about a stage", the press blades dug deeper in slating the Bad Seeds' Edinburgh performance in late April as being ". . . dangerous as an assault with cotton wool". Cave's own demeanour copped adjectives like "semi-comatose" and "masturbatory", with the bile rising to a peak in the review heading: 'CAVED IN'.

And Nick had only just crawled clear of an avalanche of discontent back here in Australia, set off when former Birthday Party label boss **Keith Glass** (Missing Link) beat him to the punch with a BP live album. . . Cave had been planning to release his own, and the first he knew of Glass's came when he stumbled across a copy in a Melbourne record shop. Then on returning to England, poor ol'Nick became embroiled in a protracted struggle for permission to cover Bob Dylan's *Wanted Man*. . . the Zim finally relented, and it's on the next Bad Seeds' LP. Phew! Rock'n'roll!

Transit Lounge

PEOPLE. EVENTS. THINGS ON THE MOVE

As Nick Cave continues to deal melodramatic death to classic ballads like *In The Ghetto* and *Wanted Man,* former Clash drummer **Topper Headon** has finally reincarnated as... **Gene Krupa!** The Top, busily pounding out his nascent solo career, has just recorded a version of Krupa's *Drummer Man* — a 40s bebop classic instrumental, which thankfully means Headon won't be singing at us just yet...

As our own Sydney **Chevron** prepares to be reborn as some hideous Caesar's Palace-style nightmare and closes its doors to rock'n'roll, consider the fate of London's famed **Marquee Club.** Plans are afoot to turn the diminutive venue into a "major West End entertainment centre", tantamount to sacrilege in the halls of legend.

Getting back to reality and justice, the **Sydney Trade Union Club** has resoundingly beaten a Licensing Court 'show cause' for closure. What's more, the famed Third Floor is back in full sway with its characteristic cultoids — though room numbers have been limited to a strict 500 by court order, and membership is now the only means of admission. But at a mere $5 a YEAR *(9¢ per week!)*, who's excluded anyway? Already, badgeholders have swelled to 4,000 and there's room for another 1,200 only. Better dash on down, but dress the part... due to Licensing Police pressure, only 'neat casuals' need apply. That means no spurs, manacles or chainmail boots, but doesn't suggest haircuts have been classed as offensive weapons... yet.

Now that **Prince** has given up performing, you're not even allowed to *look* at His Royal Paranoia without him reaching for the bodygoons... Seems O Purple One threw a launch party for his new LP *Around The World In A Day* in Miami, invited 700 'friends' and then promptly chucked half of them out for daring to stare at him. In a sympathy show of disgust, all but 12 of the liggers walked out (unaided) — besides, they discovered the drinks weren't free.

They're in for the kill already, just a year after **Marvin Gaye's** death... it's one thing for the **Commodores** *et al* to pen heartfelt tributes to the man and (accidentally?) reap mucho bucks, but here's his former record company wheeling out the posthumous releases already... What's shaping as a veritable series begins with the impending *Dream Of A Lifetime* album, drawn from unfinished material for the followup to 1983's *Midnight Love.* The cache of songs includes such, er... sexually implicit ditties as *Sanctified Pussy* and *Masochistic Baby,* which by rights would never have made it through airwave censors. No problem — the record company has arranged to cosmetically 'tone down' the tracks so as to make 'em saleable. Don't miss a trick now, y'all... Also already in the works, a collection of Gaye's interpretive ballads. *Must* hit bottom soon.

Onto nobler corporate activities... **Bigtime's** US arm has signed **Alex Chilton,** coaxing the former BoxTop out of a ten-year silence. He's just completed his first release for the company, an album of material written in the interim and recorded in Memphis — where all the classic BoxTops' tracks went down. And local signings the **Lime Spiders** and the late **Beasts Of Bourbon** are currently scaling the US College Radio and'Commercial Progressive' charts like seasoned abseilors in reverse; Bigtime newcomers the **Spikes** have just completed a three-track EP for May release, whilst the label will also reissue **Painters & Dockers'** *Love Planet* LP this month...

One-time Serious Young Insect **Peter Farnan** is back in circulation, aiming his guitar at thorax-level and higher with new Melbourne outfit **Boom Crash Opera** — also including bassist **Richard Pleasance,** ex **Bang** and **Government Drums.** With a fresh, steaming demo tape already attracting airplay on 3RRR, B.C.O. are said to tread a musical chasm somewhere between a "left-of-field sensibility and mainstream pop" (according to their press release). Sounds positively amphibious...

Landlegs didn't help Spirit Revue star **Billy Baxter** (the legend who became a Paul Kelly song) when he performed one kneedrop too many just before Easter. Despite a ripped cartilage (or something), Baxter joined Spirit mentor **Joe Camilleri** and **Nick Smith** in helping amass the now-official figure of $2,549,188.99 for Melbourne's **Royal Children's Hospital 1985 Appeal** on Good Friday. They were assisted by a mass of TV, radio and rock'n'roll personages (including **Nils Lofgren** and **Ross & Pat Wilson**) in pushing the telethon target well past a record figure...

Mondo Besto... **Mondo Rock** release a greatest hits compilation this month including a new single, *The Moment* and its predecessor, *Good Advice.* The LP's called... *Up To The Moment.* Around the same time, labelmates **Dragon** deliver a live album recorded last year at the Sydney Entertainment Centre — and it's back to the scene for a doubleheader with **Eurogliders** on May 17, to be later simulcast by 2JJJ-FM and *Rockarena.*

ABC-TV and the House of Jays will also be regularly enjoined as of May 25, the scheduled premiere of new rock/lifestyle youthfodder programme, **Beatbox.** Partly funded through a $230,000 grant from the Dept. of Employment, *Beatbox* has already gainfully enlisted 15 young Sydney ex-dolees as part of its production staff. Here's the strange bit... the music content on *Beatbox* is described in an ABC press release as "high-energy rock'n'roll with special emphasis on music from the past 4-5 years". It goes on to list some of the vibrantly contemporary acts you're likely to see: **Cream, Led Zeppelin, Iron Butterfly, Deep Purple, Rose Tattoo,** the **Angels** and **Midnight Oil.** Of these, three are certified artifacts buried up to 15 years ago, whilst at least one has been recently exhumed after ten years of suspended animation. On the more socially relevant side, *Beatbox* will also incorporate doco content on such vital youth issues as contraception, drug use and unemployment. Like... *now!*

As Stoneage Romeos lumbers its way up the UK indie charts (No 12 at last count, along with *I Want You Back*), the **Hoodoo Gurus** edge towards completion of the followup — due for July release worldwide. Before then, they're back on the road for an East Coast tour later this month...

With their *Live At The Mud Hut* album befitting the banner, the **Saints** kick off the first leg of the 'Great Garage Band Tour' this week with truly obscuros **Somebody's Sister, Potential Humans** and **Munster Terrace.** (Probably fortunately) restricted to Melbourne, the tour takes in such suitably ambient venues as the Tropicana Club, Prince of Wales Hotel, Seaview Ballroom and the Creole Club — from the 7th through to the 12th.

By way of an affectionate farewell, five bands including **Catchcry, Just a Drummer, Harem Scarem** and **Gondwanaland Project** will group under the **Hot Records** banner at Sydney's sadly doomed **Chevron Hotel** on May 8. Also appearing is a loose aggregation of Rifles/Taxis/Saints alumni under the not altogether misleading guise of **'Metal Warrior'** — featuring **Damien Lovelock** and **Mick Couvret** (Rifles), **Cab Calloway** and Wet Taxi **Mick Fisher...**

As the much-trumpeted *Countdown* Awards creep ever nearer, one can't help but notice that indie label **Regular Records** has literally scooped the pre-publicity with an incredible 12 nominations — more than any other record company, *including* the majors. In fact, only two of the resilient label's eight acts failed to score — and only because both (**Scribble** and **Deckchairs Overboard**) had maintained such low profiles over the qualifying period. (*Full report on Awards results next issue.*)

WARUMPIS REHABILITATE LOST SOUL

"An unidentified man from Haasts Bluff station (180km west of Alice Springs) known to embark on frequent and notorious drunken binges to the detriment and suffering of all concerned was reported to have been so affected when he heard the song *Nyuntu Nyaaltjirriku* — an anti-drinking song in the Luritja language from the Warumpi Band's *Big Name, No Blankets* album — that he has indeed given the grog away. It is not known whether the man was drunk or sober at the time, nevertheless there is much relief and rejoicing from those who know him..." *(Warumpis' press release)*

No, it wasn't RAM khaki warrior ANDREW McMILLAN, *still* on the semi-beaten track with the Warumpis somewhere in the vast inland desert. It's been a while between OP Rums for the Bunker Hunk in any case, as he's been on the Warumpis' tour since its first date in the Alice in late March. Any day now, we should receive the first 300 or so pages of McMillan's epic on the band — though whether we'll see its author again in some doubt. It's our guess he ran out of expenses vouchers around about two weeks back! Watch for written evidence of his survival in coming issues... and learn how the Warumpis taught him to eat goanna for a living.

Kirk & Roland joined at the brain for safety (Pic: JF/LFI)

FEARS OF FLYING

TEARS FOR FEARS pulled through a recent severe stomach-test with their lunches intact when a plane they'd caught was forced to circle Birmingham Airport in the grip of a savage wind before being able to land. A slightly green and emotional duo were poured on stage later the same day relating the usual "flying VW" jokes albeit with a note of relief in their voices — the plane was a specially chartered eight-seater faced with a bracing 150km/h headwind, enough to toss the average Fokker round like a metal salad at that... "It was the most frightening night of my life," uttered Roland Orzabel... *"These are the things we can do without"?*

JIMI BRONSKI BEATS IT

Further to going AWOL for five days in March, JIMI SOMERVILLE has now officially walked out of the BRONSKI BEAT to pursue a less ordered career with a floating assembly of acoustic players. Leaving Larry Steinbachek and Steve Bronski singerless, though they're to continue under the same name, Somerville has teamd up with a group called the Committee. The semi-permanent collective contains classically-trained saxophonist/multi-instrumentalist Richard Coles along with various sessioneers, and is described as "far less electronic and much more experimental" than the Bronskis. Since joining, the peak-pitch crooner has been involved in writing no less than six new songs.

Meanwhile the two-piece Bronskis push ahead with a new single due in July and an LP to follow; naturally a search is already under way for a new vocalist, and sources close to the band report "no ill feelings" regarding the split.

(Pic: SR/LFI)

DOWN THE TUBE with TIM McGEE

SUBURBANALITY

You're SOAPing In It!

'TS been a big month in the soap suds stakes. The eternal onscreen churning and chaining has intensified as the old and the new in the soap/mope market fiddle with formulas and roll out the barrel of human misery for us to behold. And behold we do! Combined, the Holy Trinity of *Sons And Daughters*, *A Country Practice* and *Neighbours* rate approximately enough weekly ratings points to keep a Third World country in tissues for a decade. And that's a lot more sniff than snuff we're talking about — a veritable growth industry of wretchedness.

The biggest news outside the traumatic trio mentioned above is the quick axing of *Carson's Law* and the slow suffocation of *Possession*. *Carson's Law*, having endured at least two years of tenuous upper-crust posturing, bowed out of ratings-land with its head held remarkably high — still muttering about 'quality', 'taste' and 'good things in velvet coffins'. *Possession*, on the other hand, grinds onwards with the futile determination of a hunted whale. Its characters, at once laughable and spectacularly depressing, have battled on toward their approaching genocide without even a flicker of fear. Some may think them 'possessed' as in Linda Blair, but I'd say they were closer to being 'zombies' as in *Night Of The Living Dead*.

However, the big thing in Oz Soap at the moment is *Neighbours*; NOT, as you might expect, a spinoff from the exquisite Belushi/Ackroyd farce of the same name, but a squeamish tale of suburban drudgery vaguely revolving around a certain Ramsay St. Now, soapies are notorious for appropriating geographical locations as philosophical premises: consider *Skyways* (airport antics), *Arcade* (the shop as womb, or should I say tomb), *No 96* (that labyrinth of sin!) and *The Young Doctors* (the living dead again, ward by ward). But none have bothered with anything quite so ordinary, quite so claustrophobic as the cultural cul-de-sac that is Ramsay St.

For a start, there's really only three households in the street: the Ramsays, the Robinsons, and Des and his live-in stripper Daphne. Occasionally a neighbouring drunkard, itinerant mother or saintly priest are dragged into the proceedings to begat rumours, sort out social evils or slander Daphne — but it is really the three enclaves of suburban drear that fire *Neighbours* into some sort of action. Ripped wholesale from the very bowels of a wondrous British soap called *Brookside*, *Neighbours* is swift, cheery and perfectly tailored for the 5.30pm family: dinner about to face the microwave, homework untouched, "do something about your room" and "turn that breakdancing down, Jason". It's moral with an 'M' the size of McDonald's, and boring with a 'B' that spells (smells?) Big Mac — just the right takeaway soap-burger for the early evening teev set.

As for characterisation in *Neighbours*, it's those standard Grundy puppets again, those one dimensional cut-outs mouthing twee sentiments that would turn the stomach of an autistic newt. Out of the melee of mediocrity that passes for a storyline, only three characters emerge with any conviction — and they're undoubtedly the three worst acting specimens within eyeshot of Australian television. The worst, the thinking man's mudpie, is Max Ramsay — expertly grafted from moose excreta into human form by Francis Bell. Max is a Walking chip on the shoulder, a festering knot of self-loathing and bigotry, little more intellectually than a sub-Beatles wig stapled on top of a boiler-suit.

But Max does have two sons... or 1½, if you take Shane's spinal injuries into consideration, or actually only one now that his wife has let the secret out of the bag. This one, the illegitimate Olympian diving hopeful, is called Danny. Sincerely overplayed by the brattish David Clencie, Danny's chip is about twice as enormous as Max's, which means it burns at his inner core with the intensity of slow-acting napalm. But Danny does have his little likeable idiosyncracies — like singing along with his Walkman, blaming himself for everything from Shane's sexual inadequacies to the signing of the Magna Carta, and a bedroom that would look at home either in the Darlo squats or as a set on *Simon Townsend's Wonder World*. Yep, Danny's a bit of a hip slob; why else would he litter his bedroom with posters of the likes of the Scientists, I Spit On Your Gravy, the Gun Club and the Corpse Grinders? Social realism, you betcha!

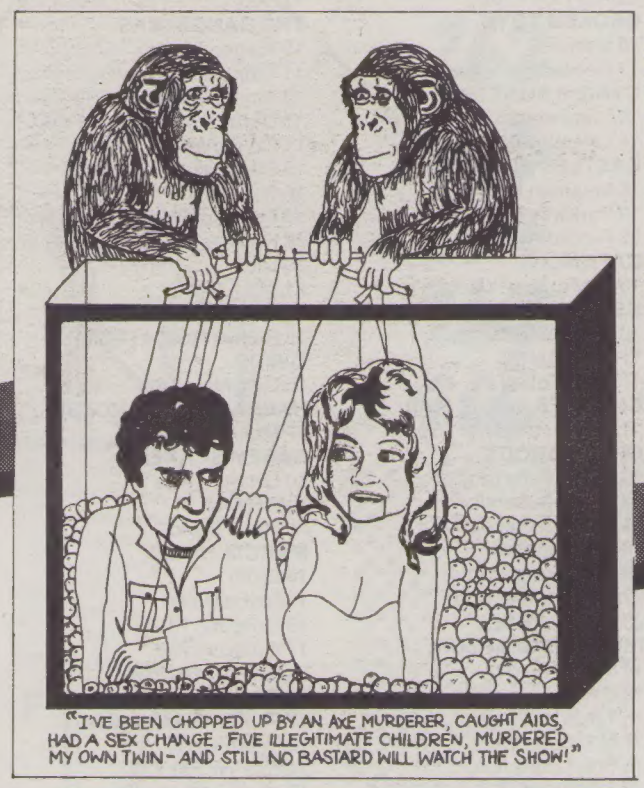
Next door in the Robinson family, a frump called Julie prowls the quasi-Habitat corridors, ever eager for some kind of emotional disturbance. Although barely 21, Julie has emerged as an authentic miserable shrew — truly the Dorrie Evans of the Trivial Pursuit generation. Complete with a face made up to unnervingly resemble a Cabbage Patch Doll, Julie's main role in *Neighbours* seems to be in accepting lifts to work and acting outraged, those most necessary of soapie activities. Fortunately, nobody suffers more in the twist of *Neighbour*ly fate than the grumbling, never-loved Julie herself. I suppose it's nothing that another twenty years in NIDA and a course of Barbie-Doll injections won't fix!

Elsewhere in Soap-land, the best news to emerge from the tiring *Sons And Daughters*' fold is the ascendency of Charlie Bartlett to full-character status. With Patricia and Karen now ineptly replaced by the bulbous Abigail-thing, only the delicate Charlie survives to uphold the *S. & D.* tradition of beauty above all else... including plausibility. The timely despatch of the O'Brien family to the ever-faithful Queensland backblocks is a godsend; few viewers would admit to missing the whines of psycho-paternal pity that emanate from Ken James, the teen star turned sour who once spent a year or two as the back legs of Skippy. With them gone, the only things clouding the S. & D. future are the lingering smell of body odour that attends the he-boy hunk of Andy and the fear of an imminent re-release of *Je T'aime*.

No such worries on *A Country Practice*, now dripping with Logies and besieged with a dose of the killer leukemia bug. Molly's ultimate demise, neatly timed to jigsaw with Vicki's baby, seems set to be a long and tedious process of selfless sacrifice. Molly's grin-and-bear-it cockiness complements Vicki's maternal heroics wonderfully; one imagines the bub will arrive at the exact second the fluorescent farm-mam bites the dust on the back of a (grim) reaper. The goo-goo should ease the pain for those ga-ga for Molly, and within moments she'll be forgotten.

Hmmm, squalid times in the rural sector. Best bet for the rest of the year — Terence and Nurse Judy! Don't say I didn't warn you. Yawn.

TIM McGEE



"I'VE BEEN CHOPPED UP BY AN AXE MURDERER, CAUGHT AIDS, HAD A SEX CHANGE, FIVE ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN, MURDERED MY OWN TWIN - AND STILL NO BASTARD WILL WATCH THE SHOW!"

(Illustration: James Molloy)

JIMMY BARNES AND EUROGLIDERS

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TOURS

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21 Bris. Cultural Cent.
24 Syd. Ent. Cent.
25 Melb. State Theatre
June 2 Adel. Fest. Theatre
5 Perth Ent. Cent.
MICK FLEETWOOD'S ZOO
10 Canecutter Tav.
11 Cairns Playpen
14 Twin Town Services
16 Parramatta Leagues
17 Cronulla Workers
18 Bankstown RSL
19 Penambit Tav.
FLYING PICKETS
10-20 Kinsela's
21-25 Melb.
Universal Theatre
27-1 June Adel Playhouse
HUNTERS AND COLLECTORS
10 Hordern Pavilion
11 Bris. Fest. Hall
15 Melb. Palais
16 Adel. Apollo
18 Perth Ent. Cent.
IRON MAIDEN
10 Bris. Fest. Hall
NIK KERSHAW
20 Hordern Pavilion
21 Bris. Fest. Hall
23 Melb. Palais
JULIAN LENNON
17 Melb. Fest. Hall
21 Syd. Ent. Cent.
MEATLOAF
22 Hordern Pavilion
25 Launceston Sports
26 Melb. Fest. Hall
28 Adel. Apollo
31 Canb. Theatre
NEW ORDER
15 Canterbury Court
17 Powerhouse
18 Selinas
20 Easts Leagues
23 Logan Campbell Theat. NZ
STRANGLERS
10 Hordern Pavilion
11 Bris. Fest. Hall
12 Newcastle Workers
15 Melb. Palais
16 Adel. Apollo
18 Perth Ent. Cent.
SWEET
Postponed till June.
Dates and venues T.B.A.
PAUL YOUNG AND THE ROYAL FAMILY
June 2 Syd. Ent Cent
5 Bris. Fest. Hall
8 Melb. Ent. Cent.

tudor's Riverwood INN

thur. 9
STRANGE TENANTS
thur. 16 THE lime spiders
thur. 23 Q.E.D.
'30 ROSE TATTOO

NORTH SYDNEY LEAGUES
sun. 12
NON STOP DANCERS
& the promise

JAGGERS
Fri. 10 Torrid Zone
Sat. 11 lime spiders
Fri. 17 Bleach Boys
Sat. 18 Cockroaches

NSW

ABBEY ROAD
11 Cootamundra Coun. Club
16 Annabelle's
18 Telford Motor Inn
22 Hornsby RSL
ALL STARS
18 Union Hotel
ANYWHERE BUT PARIS
16 The Playground
A.U.
10 Riverwood Hotel
11 Campbelltown Leagues
15 Pennant Hills Inn
16 Shanney's
17 Riverwood Hotel
18 Jolly Roger
BEAR GARDEN
10 Mona Vale Hotel
11 Syd. Cove Tav.
15 Piccadilly Hotel
16 Miranda Hotel
21 Byron Bay Arts
BIG BROTHER
10 Richmond Royal
16 Windsor Fitzroy
18 The Big Wheel
19 Richmond Inn
BIG FIVE
19 Mosman Hotel
BIG RED TRACTOR
15 St. George Sailing
17 Piccadilly Hotel
BOBBY SOX
10 Dee Why Hotel
18 Syd. Cove Tav.
BODY CURVE
18 Hotel Bondi
BOO
10 Shellharbour Workers
15 Thirroul Leagues
19 Thirroul Leagues
KEVIN BORICH EXPRESS
14 Sweethearts
15 Dapto Leagues
16 Tivoli
17 Miranda Hotel (Early)
17 Manzil (Late)
18 Blacktown RSL
19 Avalon RSL
BOY ROCKING
11 Syd. Cove Tav.
BRING PHILIP
14 Hip Hop Club
BROKEN TOYS
15 Manzil
17 Revesby Workers
CYRIL B BUNTER
10 Lumeah Inn
11 Chester Hill Hotel
CASTLES IN SPAIN
18 Mosman Hotel
19 Parkway Hotel
22 Piccadilly Hotel
CATCHCRY
10 Newc. New York Tav.
CELIBATE RIFLES
10 Graphic Arts
THE CHANGE
11 Syd. Cove Tav.
CHEQUES IN THE MAIL
11 Seven Hills Inn
CHOCKAROCK
10 Seven Hills Inn
12 The Intersection
15 The Intersection
18 Burning Palms
19 The Intersection
22 The Intersection
23 Malabar RSL
RICHARD CLAPTON
14 Sweethearts
15 Dapto Leagues
16 Tivoli
17 Miranda Hotel
18 Blacktown RSL
19 Avalon RSL
CLICHE
10 Seven Hills Inn
11 Dapto Leagues
16 Namatjira Hotel
COCKROACHES
16 Castle Hill RSL
COLD SWEAT
11 Chevron
14 New York Tav.
18 Hip Hop Club
21 New York Tav.
CRYSTAL SET
10 Mosman Hotel
11 Hopetoun Hotel
14 Manzil
18 Strawberry Hill Hotel
THE CUCKOOS
16 Dee Why Hotel
DAY TIME ACTORS
10 Mona Vale Hotel
18 Hawkesbury Sports
D D SMASH
10 Shellharbour Workers
11 Hawkesbury Sports
12 Tivoli
15 Didis
17 Revesby Workers
18 Jadram Hajduk Club
19 Tivoli
23 Ingleburn RSL
THE DIVINYLS
15 Thirroul Leagues
DO RE MI
21 Byron Bay Arts
DYNAMIC HEPNOTICS
14 Young Services
15 Wagga Rules
16 Royals Rugby (ACT)
17 Mittagong RSL
18 Goulburn Workers
21 Tivoli
22 Dee Why Hotel
23 Sweethearts
ENTOURAGE
11 Illawarra Leagues
17 Didis
FINGER GUNS
22 Piccadilly Hotel
FLAMING HANDS
16 Dee Why Hotel
18 Corrimal Leagues
FLOTSAM JETSAM
17 Dee Why Hotel
18 Roxon
23 Tivoli
FOREVER FIFTEEN
10 Roxon
11 Caringbah Inn
12 Tenambit Tav.
17 Miranda Hotel
18 Mona Vale Hotel
23 Roxon
14 HOURS
22 Mosman Hotel
FULL MARKS
11 Syd. Cove Tav.
THE GANGSTERS
10 Wagga Rules
11 Tumut RSL
12 Ainslie Rugby (ACT)
13 Didis
14 Collegians
15 Stallions
16 Sheilas
17 Frat. Bowling
18 Huskisson RSL
20 Didis
21 Aust. Hotel
22 Canb. Labour Club (ACT)
23 Royals Rugby (ACT)
GIMIX
10 Colonial Hotel
HAPPY HATE ME NOTS
17 Mosman Hotel
HAREM SCAREM
10 Graphic Arts
KIM HART
18 Hotel Bondi
MARCIA HINES
14 Didis
15 Moby Dicks
16 Gulgong RSL
17 Gulgong RSL
HOODOO GURUS
10 Palais
11 Pt. Kembla Leagues
12 Panthers
14 Dee Why Hotel
15 St. George Sailing
16 Castle Hill RSL
17 Balmain Leagues
20 ANU (ACT)
IN CROWD
10 Sheilas
11 Mona Vale Hotel
18 Royals Rugby (ACT)
INTERVIEW
12 Tivoli
I. T.
17 Banjo's
ITCHY FEET
18 Syd. Cove Tav.
21 Tivoli
JIMMY AND THE BOPKATZ
10 Simone's
17 Austral Bowling
18 Mittagong RSL
23 Scandals
THE JOHNNYS
10 Paddington RSL
11 Miranda Hotel
JUMP INCORPORATED
10 Paddington RSL
17 Manzil
18 Mona Vale Hotel
KAMIKAZE KATZ
10 Collegians
KAM SHA
10 Roxon
11 Blacktown RSL
PAUL KELLY AND COLOURED GIRLS
21 Tivoli
23 Griffith Uni.
THE KELPIES
17 Mosman Hotel
KIDS IN THE KITCHEN
10 Bankstown Sports
11 Palais
12 Avalon RSL
LE BOP
15 Drummoyne Rowing
LIME SPIDERS
11 Local Inn
22 St. George Sailing
LIQUID ENGINEERS
15 Cardiff Workers
16 Manzil
17 Collegians
18 Mona Vale Hotel
MANDRAKE
10 Caringbah Inn
22 Bayview Hotel
MANY HANDS
10 Mosman Hotel
MILKY BAR KIDS
18 Shanneys
MIRRORED IMAGE
10 Blacktown RSL
17 St. Marys Band
MISTER SISTER
20 Stallions
23 Penrith Centre Tav.
THE MULLANES
21 Byron Bay Arts
J J MULLARD
23 Sylvania Hotel
MY MY
15 Mosman Hotel
NAUGHTY RHYTHMS
10 Dee Why Hotel
NIGHT CREW
10 Collectors Tav.
11 Jungle Room
17 Big Horn Coun. Club
23 West Tower Tav.
NO NONSENSE
15 Sweethearts
16 Caringbah Inn
17 Campbelltown Leagues
18 Syd. Cove Tav.
NON STOP DANCERS
10 Balmain Leagues
11 Cardiff Workers
12 Nth. Syd. Leagues
17 Selinas
22 Sweethearts
THE NOTATIONS
12 Dee Why Hotel
19 Dee Why Hotel
PARTY GIRLS
10 Roxon
12 St. George Budapest
18 Chester Hill Hotel
PINK SLIPS
14 Sandringham Hotel
PROMINENT SYDNEY BUSINESSMEN
15 Yugal Soccer Club
17 Bayview Hotel
22 Yugal Soccer Club
THE PROMISE
11 Hawkesbury Sports
12 Nth. Syd. Leagues
15 Sweethearts
17 Selinas
18 Piccadilly Hotel
19 Thirroul Leagues
23 Sweethearts
PSYCHOTIC TURNBUCKLES
17 Caringbah Inn
QED
22 Dapto Leagues
23 Riverwood Inn
REASONS WHY
18 Syd. Cove Tav.
ROBERTS FROST
17 Hotel Manly
THE ROCK WALLABIES
10 Arncliffe Hotel
ROSE TATTOO
10 St. Mary Leagues
11 Dee Why Hotel
SAMURAI TRASH
10 Manzil
18 Jadram Hajduk Club
SAVANNAH
10 Stallions
18 West Tower Tav.
SCREAMING TRIBESMEN
14 Dee Why Hotel
16 Piccadilly Hotel
17 Caringbah Inn
22 St. George Sailing
SEAMONSTERS
15 Hip Hop Club
17 ANU (ACT)
18 Floyds (ACT)
SHAKE 288
16 Mosman Hotel
SHARKS
15 Epping Hotel
SILENT TYPES
18 Piccadilly Hotel
SKEL—E—TONES
10 Graphic Arts
SKOLARS
11 Mosman Hotel
SLIPS
11 Palais
SOLDIER
10 Forest Inn
11 Blue Boar Inn
17 Forest Inn
19 Royal Antler Hotel
22 Oasis Hotel
23 Sheridan Hotel
SPELL ELLE
16 Windsor Fitzroy
17 Richmond Royal
SPY VS SPY
11 Syd. Cove Tav.
17 Toronto Bowling
18 Orana Hotel
STATUES CRY
18 Mosman Hotel
STIG CAN'T CLAP
22 Mosman Hotel
STRANGE TENANTS
10 St. Mary Bowling
11 Bankstown RSL (Early)
11 Miranda Hotel (Late)
12 St. George Budapest
STUPIDITY
10 Paddington RSL
SURPRISE SURPRISE
11 Mosman Hotel
SWANEE
10 Blacktown RSL
11 Caringbah Inn
12 Tenambit Tav.
SWINGING TEES
22 Dee Why Hotel
TAPE LOOP
23 Mosman Hotel
TEMPER TEMPER
16 Suth. Comm. Cent.
23 Piccadilly Hotel
THE 3 MUSKETEERS
15 Mosman Hotel
TOUGH LUXURY
10 St. Mary Leagues
11 Dee Why Hotel
THE TRIBE
11 Orana Hotel
17 Floyds (ACT)
THE TRILOBITES
10 Trade Union Club
11 Suth. Royal Hotel
16 Piccadilly Hotel
18 Lismore Hotel
UNCANNY X MEN
14 Pt. Macq. RSL
15 Cardiff Workers
16 Ingleburn RSL
17 Selinas
18 Hawkesbury Sports
UNCONTROLABLE URGES
14 Sandringham Hotel
URBAN GUERILLAS
12 Bondi Pavilion
16 Sandringham Hotel
17 Racecourse Hotel
23 Sandringham Hotel
THE VINCENTS
12 Union Hotel
19 Union Hotel
LEE WALKER BAND
15 Canb. Labour Club (ACT)
16 Royals (ACT)
17 Carmens
18 Manning River V.S.S.C.
JOHN PAUL YOUNG
10 Wellington Soldiers
11 Griffith Services
12 Railway Hotel
YOUNG HEARTS
22 Sweethearts
THE YOUNG LIONS
11 Blacktown RSL
16 Caringbah Inn
17 Selinas
18 Manzil
23 Riverwood Inn
ZIPS
10 Syd. Cove Tav.
12 Fannys Tav.
15 Greenfields Tav.
16 Orana Hotel
17 Taree RSL
18 Coffs Harbour Serv.
19 Grafton Services

VIC

THE ADVENTURE
11 Tarmac Hotel
ASAMBU AFRO—ROCK
10 Carlton Inn
11 Parkview Inn
ASTRO BOYS
17 The Venue
AUSSIE MAYO
15 Village Green Hotel
16 De Marcos Hotel
17 Pier Hotel
22 Bells Hotel
23 The Cockpit
BEACH NUTS
17 Prince Of Wales
BLEACH BOYS
10 Prospect Hill Hotel
11 Tarmac Hotel (Early)
11 Billboard (Late)
12 Eureka Hotel
KEVIN BORICH EXPRESS
10 Ferntree Gully Hotel
11 Village Green Hotel (Early)
11 The Venue (Late)
12 Pier Hotel
22 Mildura
23 Billboard
BRIX
11 Wy-Yung Hotel
CATCH 22
10 Royal Hotel
11 Beaumaris Hotel
22 Village Green Hotel
CELIBATE RIFLES
17 Prince Of Wales
19 Prospect Hill Hotel
COSMIC PSYCHO
17 Prince Of Wales
DEKADANCE
10 Bridge Hotel
11 Bridge Hotel
15 Central Club Hotel
THE DELMATICS
10 Union Hotel
DE MIX
10 Beaumaris Hotel
11 Astradome
EASI ROCKERS
11 Union Hotel
FIRE BELOW
11 Prince Of Wales
GEISHA
17 The Venue
GIMIX
15 Bells Hotel
16 Beaumaris Hotel
17 Royal Hotel
18 De Marcos Hotel
GOANNA BAND
14 Robinvale Theatre
22 Hamilton Town Hall
23 Barn Palais
HOT ROCK
11 Sherbourne Hotel
INNER SLEEVE
11 Prince Of Wales
JACKO
11 Tarmac Hotel
JOHNNY SAID SO
11 Tropicana Club
PAUL KELLY AND COLOURED GIRLS
16 Central Club Hotel
17 Prospect Hill Hotel
18 The Venue
19 Eureka Hotel
KIDS IN THE KITCHEN
16 Billboard
LIQUID ENGINEERS
11 The Venue
MENTAL AS ANYTHING
10 The Club
11 The Club
MUNSTER TERRACE
10 Prince Of Wales
12 Seaview Ballroom
OLYMPIC SIDEBURNS
10 The Venue
11 Central Club Hotel
PAINTERS AND DOCKERS
10 Central Club Hotel
PHANTOM BAND
18 Rock Garden
PHOTOPLAY
11 The Venue
THE POTENTIAL HUMANS
10 Prince Of Wales
12 Seaview Ballroom
ROCKAFELLAZ
17 Beaumaris Hotel
19 The Cockpit
ROSE TATTOO
16 Golden Valley Inn
17 Ferntree Gully Hotel
19 Prospect Hill Hotel
THE SAINTS
10 The Venue
11 Central Club Hotel
12 Prospect Hill Hotel
SCREAMING TRIBESMEN
10 Central Club Hotel
11 Prince Of Wales
12 Prospect Hill Hotel
7 DESPERATE MEN
18 Beaumaris Hotel
SHINDIGGERS
11 Prince Of Wales
SOMEBODY'S SISTER
10 Prince Of Wales
12 Seaview Ballroom
SPANIARDS
10 De Marcos Hotel
11 Prospect Hill Hotel
16 Dava Hotel
1 De Marcos Hotel
23 The Venue
SURVIVAL
22 De Marcos Hotel
23 Beaumaris Hotel
SWANEE
15 Bridge Hotel
THE VENETIANS
16 Billboard
17 The Club
18 The Venue
VENETTA'S TAXI
10 Billboard
11 Armadale Hotel
LEE WALKER BAND
10 Edwards Tav.
11 De Marcos Hotel
12 The Cockpit
THE ZIG AND ZAG SCABWALLY DIRT BAND
10 Prince Of Wales
12 Seaview Ballroom

QLD

DIED PRETTY
10 Easts Leagues
11 Tube Club
DO RE MI
22 Mansfield Tav
23 Bombay Rock
HUNTERS AND COLLECTORS
11 Bris. Fest. Hall
MISTER SISTER
10-18 The Resort
THE MULLANES
22 Mansfield Tav.
23 Bombay Rock
GEORGE SMILOVICI
14 Walts
15 Maxis
16 Mansfield Tav.
17 Canecutter Hotel
18 Nitehawks
SOLID CITIZENS
10 Playroom
11 The Palace
12 Caloundra Civic Cent.
LEE WALKER BAND
20-23 The Resort
ZIPS
22 Maryborough Showgrounds
23 Across The Sea

SA

GOANNA BAND
15 bonney Theatre
16 The Ranch
17 Pt. Pirie Theatre
18 Sundowner Hotel
20 Old Lion Hotel
SAINTS
15 Toucan Tou
16 Le Rox
17 Pharoahs
18 Findon Hotel
19 Tivoli Hotel
SWANEE
16 Pt. Pirie
17 Old Lion Hotel
18 Bridgeway Hotel
19 Bridgeway Hotel
TEMPER TEMPER
10 Richmond Hotel
11 Princess Berkley
12 La Cantinas
THE VENETIANS
10 Old Lion Hotel
11 Findon Hotel

NT

WARUMPI BAND
10 Gapuwiyak
11 Galiwinku, Elcho Isl.
15 Ramingining
16 Milingimbi
17 Maningrida
18 Nightcliff Hotel
19 Katherine
22 Tennant Creek
23 Warrabri

TAS

AUSSIE MAYO
10 Commercial Tav
11 Cecil Hotel

WA

HUNTERS AND COLLECTORS
19 Equator Club
23 Red Parrot Club

THE 1985 GIG GUIDE

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U.S. DESPATCH

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THE CONFEDERATE RESURGENCE

THE AMERICANS are coming! The Americans are coming! Good ol' fashioned American rock, long disregarded by the hip set as an ugly, disfiguring pimple on the rump of progress, has now been deemed as the next big thing. Love 'em or hate 'em, what **Springsteen** and **Prince** have done is legitimise the phrase "Buy American" in a pop context. In their wake, we're seeing a whole barnful of American bands being taken seriously worldwide. Not since the emergence of the New York scene circa 1972-77 (**New York Dolls, T. Heads, Blondie,** etc.) has there been so much blabber about a new American renaissance.

Los Lobos and the **Long Ryders**, both from Los Angeles, graced the cover of the *NME* within a month of each other. *Melody Maker* recently ran a cover story on the American resurgence, with a band guide. The interesting thing about this new wave is that it is not centred in any one city. There's noteworthy stuff coming out of Georgia (**R.E.M., Love Tractor, Guadalcanal Diary**), Arizona (**Meat Puppets**), Minneapolis (**Replacements, Husker Du**, the **Suburbs**), New York (**Beastie Boys, Sonic Youth, Urban Blight**), and Texas (the **Big Boys**).

But two of the most exciting scenes are coalescing right here in California. In Los Angeles, despite a dearth of places to play, there seems to be a tentative feeling that local music — after a long bout with gloom, Anglophilia and metal — is getting better. Columbia has just released the debut EP by **Fishbone**, the anarchic all-black group who combine **Frank Zappa's** nonsense humour with **George Clinton's** sense of rhythm. Fave Tracks: *Lyin' Ass Bitch* and *V.T.T.L.O.T.F.D.G.F.*, which stands for *Voyage To The Land Of The Freeze-Dried Godzilla Farts*. What Columbia, never the most experimental of labels, is going to do with these guys remains to be seen.

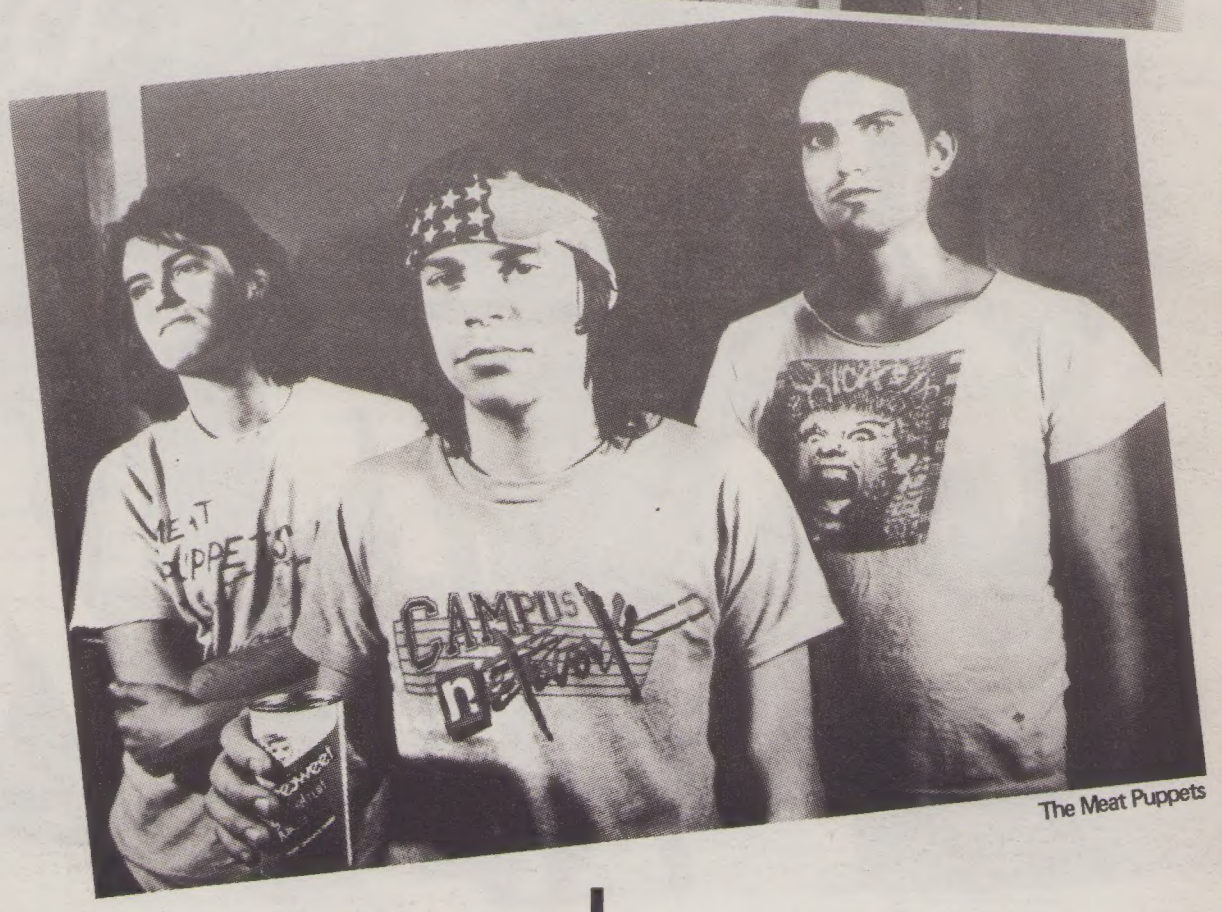
The **Three O'Clock**'s quasi-psychedelic, mood-altering visions are captured on their I.R.S. debut, *Arrive Without Travelling*. **Michael Quercio**'s vocals are still weak, but the more muscular sound of the record could go a long way in establishing their reputation.

But the BIG NEWS is **Lone Justice**, the country-rock band fronted by the plaintive-voiced **Maria McKee**. Their Warner Brothers debut, produced by **Jimmy Iovine**, could be an across-the-board hit as there is enough on it to please a wide audience. But because the songs are so strong, this doesn't seem like overcommercialisation or pandering to a mass audience.

The Stax-ska-mod influenced **Untouchables** have been in England recording their MCA U.S./Stiff U.K. debut album. They've done some live dates in Blighty and have been well-received — it's good to see these guys, who banged around L.A. for so long and were written off as Special-clones, getting a needed break. Also (possibly) headed for England are the **Prime Movers**, a nervy, jangling trio from Pasadena. They've signed to Island worldwide, and are one of the brighter points on the Southern California horizon. Other fresh faces are **St Regis** (signed to PolyGram), **Cruzados** (signed to Arista), and **Pop Art** (currently unsigned).

But perhaps the most controversial act on the local scene right now is the **Unforgiven**. An outgrowth of a punk band called the **Stepmothers**, the Unforgiven — who have touched off the kind of bidding war that resembles piranhas in a feeding frenzy — could be described as the **Alarm** after massive injections of testosterone. These guys are men's men — they spend an hour pumping iron and running a mile before each rehearsal! They shun drugs. Their stage attire is **Robert E. Lee** meets **Clint Eastwood**, all Confederacy and gunslinging militancy. *Amazing Grace* is an integral part of their set. They have *four* lead guitars and a drummer who stands up. They've been quoted as saying lines like: "It (*record company attention*) started like a firestorm. It just blew in from the West, and all of a sudden we've been engulfed." Lead singer **John Henry Jones** listens to **Aaron Copeland** at home. You can't get much more American than this! I'd like to put **Morrissey, Lloyd Cole, Roddy Frame**, maybe a stray **Cocteau Twin** and **Julie Birchill** in the ring with the **Unforgiven** and let 'em go at it. We'll show those Brits who's boss. On a more serious note, up in San Francisco, a different movement is afoot. While L.A. is currently obsessed with grungy guitars and an all-purpose Americana, San Francisco is experimenting with something called 'worldbeat' Because San Francisco has a larger African and Caribbean population, much of what is happening up there has a decidedly Third World pulse — a phenomenon which has earned the tag "worldbeat" Some of the most popular are **Big City**, the **Looters** (who last year toured Nicaragua), **Mapenzi**, the **Freaky Executives**, and **Special Fun**. None of these is signed yet, and because there hasn't been a big media hoopla about the scene, it tends to get ignored in favour of the latest garage band from Minneapolis. But with any luck, things will change for Baghdad-by-the-Bay... which hasn't had a decent local scene in years.

Fishbone



The Meat Puppets

QWEST Records, **Quincy Jones**' Warner Bros.-distributed label known more for soft r'n'b is releasing **New Order**'s latest album. The company is looking to get into the rock market, and reportedly New Order were quite thrilled to be signed to a black music label... **Prince's** controversial Easter morning concert in Miami was his last. He says he is giving up touring to concentrate on records, films, and finding "the ladder", whatever that means!... **Tom Waits**, who wrote and performed the music for *Streetwise*, an acclaimed documentary about runaways, has entered the studio to begin work on a new album... **Madonna**, who recently slithered through town and played three sold-out shows, has attracted good reviews for her performance in *Desperately Seeking Susan*, the serio-comedy starring **Roseanne Arquette** and directed by **Susan Seidelman** (*Smithereens*)... A heavy metal band-aid style record is under way. Co-ordinated by **Dio**'s **Jimmy Bain** and **Vivian Campbell**, the group — called **Hear N' Aid** — is comprised of members of **Judas Priest**, the **Scorpions, Iron Maiden, Dokken, Quiet Riot, Night Ranger, Ratt, Y&T, Bon Jovi, Black Sabbath, Queensryche** and **Spinal Tap**, as well as **Ronnie James Dio** and **Lita Ford**. This follows on the heels of Latin and Gospel all-star, all-for-one-and-all-for-Africa records... Columbia Records is releasing *Dream Of A Lifetime*, a set of previously unreleased **Marvin Gaye** tracks... I.R.S. Records, a mainstay on the local scene since forming in the late 1970s, is changing distribution from A&M to MCA. This gives MCA, once known as the sleepy cousin in the record industry, access to one of the most vital labels in the country. (MCA also took over distribution of Motown a couple years back.) Upcoming on the I.R.S. roster are releases from **R.E.M.**, hot British band the **Truth, Stan Ridgway** (whose three-track maxi-single is out in England already), the **Go-Go's**, and ex-Go-Go **Jane Wiedlin...**

Lloyd Cole & The Commotions came into town, but didn't create the kind of stir we associate with the hip young Brits. The *L.A. Times*, which usually reviews everything, didn't even bother to cover the show — instead everyone was over at a seedy dive watching **Salem 66**, the hottest new thing from Boston... **George Clinton** is producing the next album for L.A. punk-funk heathens **Red Hot Chili Peppers**, for EMI-America. We can only guess what *that* is going to sound like...

U2 came through, sweeping the L.A. and Bay Areas up in a state of frenzy. One of the highpoints of these shows came when **Bono** asked for a volunteer guitarist from the audience. Selecting one person from the outstretched hands, Bono led the kid onstage and showed him the chords to **Dylan**'s **Knockin' On Heaven's Door** and let him play. As the new recruit got comfortable, the rest of the band left the stage, leaving the lad alone in the spotlight. The group finally returned to the stage, the kid gave the guitar back, and the audience applauded wildly.

David Byrne's solo album, *Knee Plays*, is totally unlike anything he's done before. Byrne, known for his use of rhythm and movement, has totally de-emphasised rhythm in favour of vocals and spare horn arrangements. No hit single there, but then it's doubtful anyone expected one. Expect a new **Talking Heads** album and a T. Heads soundtrack LP (which coincides with Byrne's film directorial debut) later this year... (*See review of their performance film* Stop Making Sense, *in* Seen & Heard.)

CHARTZ

MAINSTREAM JIVE

SINGLES

TF	LF	HP	TITLE	ARTIST	LABEL
1	1	1	**WE ARE THE WORLD**	USA For Africa	CBS
2•	8	2	**THE HEAT IS ON**	Glenn Frey	WEA
3	5	3	**BARBADOS**	Models	FES
4•	—	4	**ONE MORE NIGHT**	Phil Collins	WEA
5•	16	5	**SOME LIKE IT HOT**	Power Station	EMI
6	2	2	**I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER**	Jim Diamond	FES
7	3	3	**NEUTRON DANCE**	The Pointer Sisters	RCA
8•	—	9	**CAN'T FIGHT THIS FEELING**	REO Speedwagon	CBS
10	4	3	**YOU SPIN ME ROUND**	Dead Or Alive	CBS
11	7	7	**SUSSUDIO**	Phil Collins	WEA
12	14	11	**I'M ON FIRE**	Bruce Springsteen	CBS
13	6	1	**SHOUT**	Tears For Fears	POL
14	12	10	**YOU'RE SO STRONG**	Mental As Anything	WEA
15	19	15	**THINGS CAN ONLY GET BETTER**	Howard Jones	WEA
16	9	8	**LOVERBOY**	Billy Ocean	EMI
17	—	17	**I WANNA HEAR IT FROM YOUR LIPS**	Eric Carmen	CBS
18	—	18	**GOTTA BE WRONG (Way To Love)**	Dynamic Hepnotics	FES
19	18	16	**I'M AN INDIVIDUAL**	Jacko	FES
20	—	19	**RESPECT YOURSELF**	Kane Gang	POL

ALBUMS

TF	LF	HP	TITLE	ARTIST	LABEL
1	1	1	**NO JACKET REQUIRED**	Phil Collins	WEA
2	2	1	**BORN IN THE USA**	Bruce Springsteen	CBS
3	5	3	**SONGS FROM THE BIG CHAIR**	Tears For Fears	POL
4	6	4	**DEKADANCE**	INXS	WEA
5•	—	5	**THE SECRET OF ASSOCIATION**	Paul Young	CBS
6	4	4	**PARADE**	Spandau Ballet	FES
7	3	2	**SHE'S SO UNUSUAL**	Cyndi Lauper	CBS
8	8	7	**BUILDING THE PERFECT BEAST**	Don Henley	CBS
10•	—	10	**THE WORKS**	Queen	EMI
11	14	8	**CHINESE WALL**	Philip Bailey	CBS
12	10	3	**CENTERFIELD**	John Fogerty	WEA
13	19	12	**AMADEUS SOUNDTRACK**	Various	FES
14	12	12	**BREAK OUT**	The Pointer Sisters	RCA
15	16	15	**SECRET SECRETS**	Joan Armatrading	FES
16	15	15	**STOP MAKING SENSE**	Talking Heads	EMI
17	—	1	**FACE VALUE**	Phil Collins	WEA
18	—	18	**RATTLESNAKES**	Lloyd Cole And The Commotions	POL
19	20	18	**THE RIVER**	Bruce Springsteen	CBS
20	11	1	**LIKE A VIRGIN**	Madonna	WEA

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• Denotes bullet performer.

AUSTRALIA NOW

TF	LF	HP	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1•	—		**THE MOFFS**	Another Day In The Sun	Citadel
2•	—	2	**THE STEMS**	She's A Monster	Citadel
3	2	1	**THE MODELS**	Barbados	Mushroom
4	4	4	**GANG GAJANG**	House Of Cards	Mercury
5•	13	5	**DYNAMIC HEPNOTICS**	Gotta Be Wrong (...)	White
6	1	1	**HUXTON CREEPERS**	Murderess	Big Time
7•	RE	1	**LIME SPIDERS**	Slave Girl	Citadel
8	17	7	**MENTAL AS ANYTHING**	You're So Strong	Regular
9	8	1	**ROCKMELONS**	Time Out (...)	Phantom
10	6	1	**HAPPY HATE ME NOTS**	Won't Do Any Good	Waterfront
11	5	5	**VITABEATS**	Boom Box	HOT
12	9	9	**CHAOS**	Lucky Country	Chaos
13	3	3	**PSYCHOTIC TURNBUCKLES**	Creeps	Vi-Nil
14	18	14	**SPY VS SPY**	One Of A Kind	Powderworks
15	11	10	**PAINTERS & DOCKERS**	Basia	Big Time
16	7	1	**THE TRIFFIDS**	Field Of Glass	HOT
17	20	13	**PERMANENT DAMAGE**	I'm Not Spoilt	Reactor
18	RE	9	**VICIOUS CIRCLE**	Searching For The Solution	Reactor
19	—	19	**IGNITERS**	On The Road	Powderworks
20	10	6	**JOHN KENNEDY**	Miracle In Marrickville	Waterfront

TF	LF	HP	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	1	1	**THE BIRTHDAY PARTY**	It's Still Living	Missing Link
2	8	2	**THE GO-BETWEENS**	Very Quck On The Eye	Manmade
3	2	2	**THE SAINTS**	Live In A Mud Hut	New Rose
4	4	4	**MENTAL AS ANYTHING**	Fundamental	Regular
5	—	5	**HUNTERS & COLLECTORS**	The Way To Go Out	White
6	5	1	**INXS**	Dekadance	WEA
7	3	3	**DEPRESSION**	Depression	Reactor
8	6	6	**HAREM SCAREM**	Dogman	AuGoGo
9	11	9	**SEVERED HEADS**	City Slab Horror	INK
10	10	1	**MIDNIGHT OIL**	Red Sails In The Sunset	CBS
11	16	11	**WARUMPI BAND**	Big Name, No Blankets	Powderworks
12•	19	12	**SPY VS SPY**	Meet Us Inside	Powderworks
13	—	13	**GOANNA**	Oceania	WEA
14	14	143	**COLOURED STONE**	Koonibba Rock	Imparja
15	7	1	**THE GO-BETWEENS**	Springhill Fair	Sire
16	—	16	**NAUGHTY RHYTHMS**	A Naughty Compilation	Survival
17	9	1	**VARIOUS**	Regular Rockabilly	Regular
18	20	18	**TRILOBITES**	Let's Pump	Tilobites
19	—	19	**THE TRIBE**	Warcry	CBS
20	—	20	**THE SCIENTISTS**	Rubber Never Sleeps	AuGoGo

The information for these charts was supplied by shops in Brisbane/Sydney/Canberra/Melbourne/Adelaide/Perth.
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NEW RELEASES

SINGLES

KIM WILDE ..... Rage To Love (WEA)
DIRE STRAITS ..... So Far Away (POL)
BIG COUNTRY ..... Just A Shadow (POL)
JAMES KING AND THE VALENTINES ..... The Angels Know (POL)
BETTY VALENTINO ..... Young Men (POL)
MONDO ROCK* ..... The Moment (POL)
KOO DE TAH* ..... Too Young For Promises (POL)
KATRINA AND THE WAVES ..... Walking On Sunshine (EMI)
HUGH MASEKELA ..... Don't Go Lose It Baby (EMI)
MODERN TALKING ..... You're My Heart, You're My Soul (EMI)
STARVATION ..... Starvation (CBS)
MICK JAGGER ..... Lucky In Love (CBS)
FREDDIE MERCURY ..... I Was Born To Love You (CBS)
SHRIEKBACK ..... Mercy Dash (Ready For This) (FES)
YUKIHIRO TAKAHASHI ..... Walking To The Beat (FES)
JAMIE RAE ..... Pretty One (FES)
EUGENE WILDE ..... Gotta Get You Home Tonight (FES)
PAUL KELLY* ..... From St Kilda To Kings Cross (FES)
EURYTHMICS .... Would I Lie To You (RCA)
RITA BENETTI ..... I Believe (That I Should (RCA)

ALBUMS

THE BOOMTOWN RATS ..... In The Long Grass (POL)
HANK WILLIAMS ..... Rare Takes And Radio Cuts (POL)
YNGWIE MALMSTEEN .. Rising Force (POL)
THE PASSIONS ..... Passion Plays (POL)
FAWLTY TOWERS ..... The Fawlty Towers Collection (POL)
PRINCE ..... Around The World In A Day (WEA)
ZZ TOP ..... Deguello (WEA)
LES CRANE ..... Desiderata (WEA)
GEORGE THOROGOOD AND THE DESTROYERS ..... Maverick (EMI)
GREG KIHN ..... Citizen Kihn (EMI)
THE COMEDY HARMONISTS ..... Virtuosi In Harmony (EMI)
ROMAN HOLLIDAY ..... One Foot In Your Door (EMI)
GILBERT BECAUD ..... Desperado (EMI)

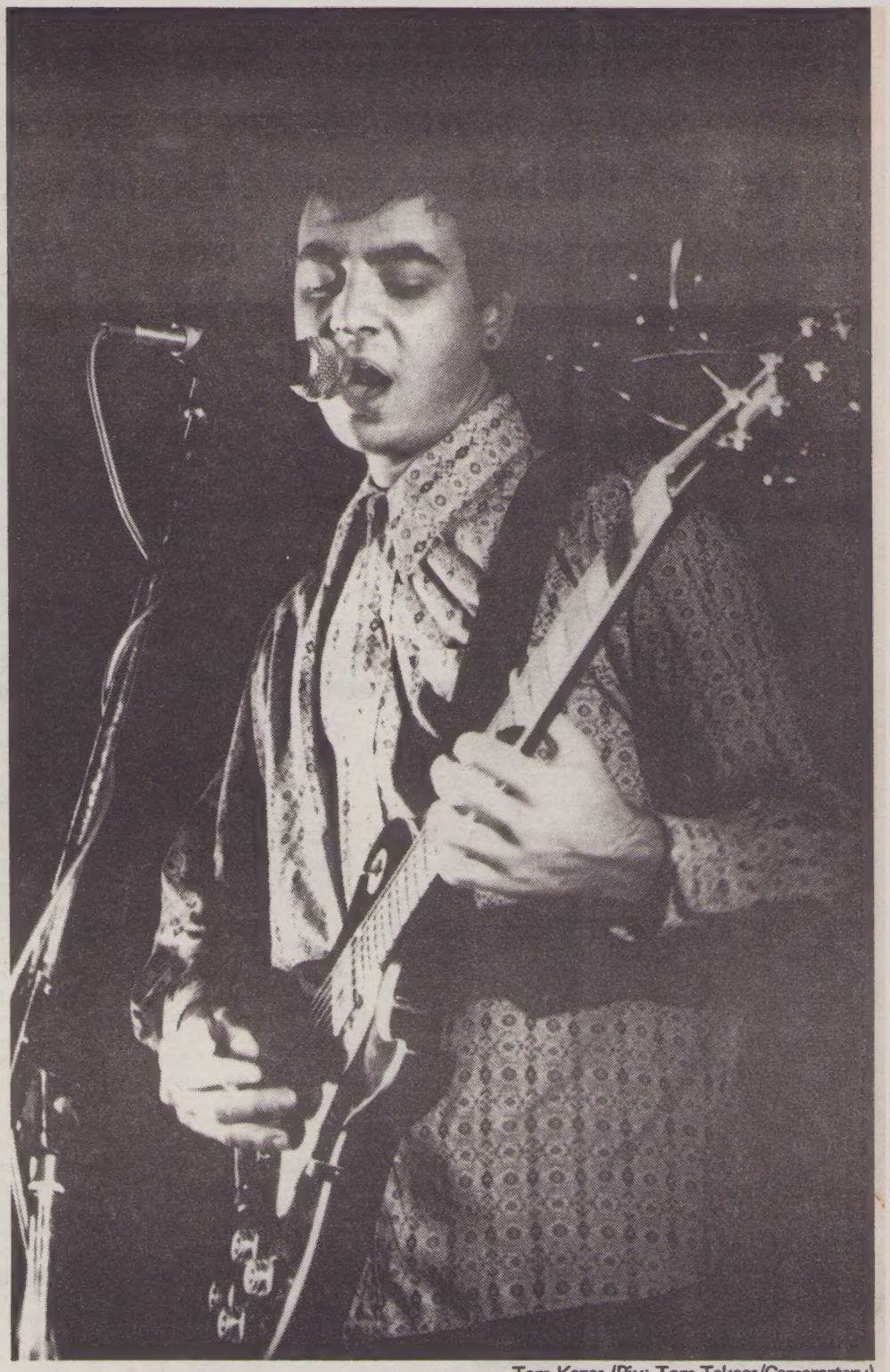
(Pic: Paul Cox/LFI)

SLIM DUSTY ..... I'll Take Mine Country Style (EMI)
THE POWER STATION ..... The Power Station (EMI)
ANDREW LLOYD-WEBBER ..... Requiem (EMI)
HUNTERS AND COLLECTORS* ..... The Way To Go Out (FES)
PAUL KELLY* ..... Post (FES)
MICHAEL JACKSON ..... One Day In Your Life (RCA)
MARY JANE GIRLS ..... Only For You (RCA)
AUTOGRAPH ..... Sign In Pleasure (RCA)
CARL PERKINS ..... 20 Golden Pieces Of Carl Perkins (RCA)
JERMAINE JACKSON ..... Let's Get Serious (RCA)

The Sexist Tack Parade (pick the odd girl out)

The Moffs

Flying In The Face Of Fashion



Tom Kazas (Pix: Tom Takacs/Camerartery)

MENTION the Moffs in any discussion on current Sydney rock'n'roll bands and you're likely to receive sharply divided opinions as to their merit. Some might describe them as an excellently realised homage to sixties British psychedelia; or that the Moffs are an exciting live band with a masterful sense of dynamics, good choice of covers and even better originals; or that their singer/guitarist/songwriter Tom Kazas is one of the more talented musicians in Sydney.

On the other hand, there are critics who point to the Moffs as a trendy, fad-conscious band stuck in a pseudo-psychedelic timewarp; that they cater to an audience of kids who had suddenly discovered the sixties and think that anyone who plays the odd Yardbirds cover and wears paisley shirts *must* be hip; or even attract a comment as vitriolic as "they don't have an original bone in their bodies".

What everyone agrees on, however, is that the Moffs have had a fair amount of success in what's so far a brief career. For want of a better description, there is a "vibe" on the Moffs at the moment. It's not something they're all that keen on discussing; being a very young band (all round 20 years of age), they'd prefer to take things at a leisurely pace and just see what happens next.

The Moffs have existed for a mere thirteen months, but their prime-mover, Tom Kazas, has been involved in music for five years. Teaching himself to play guitar, he was fired initially by the nascent sounds of the Jam and the Cure. But his biggest formative inspiration, almost incongruously, was Led Zeppelin's fretboard maestro Jimmy Page. "I picked up a lot from listening to Page; I'd try and play his solos when I was learning," recalls Kazas.

After a while, he realised his musical enjoyment would increase if he moved out of his bedroom and started to play with other people. A friend of his at high school, David Byrnes, proved to be the first link. Like thousands of other budding young hopefuls, Kazas and bassist Byrnes jammed away in their respective loungerooms. Around the time of folding their very first band, a high school three-piece, they met and formed a friendship with Nick Potts, a harmonica-playing mod. After finishing school, they gently persuaded Potts into buying a keyboard, brought in a drummer named Matthew, and the Moffs Mark I were born. They didn't last long.

BYRNES: "Matthew was about 16, and he needed his mother's permission to play, to rehearse, to do *anything*. He even wanted his mother to manage us! Anyway, he had an attack of nerves and quit half an hour before our live debut at the Vulcan Hotel."

This signalled a nine-month period of limbo for the embryonic trio, a wasteland that led them back through the eons, back to... AH! The Sixties! Carnaby St... granny glasses... paisley shirts! The Moffs listened, and absorbed music by the Move, the Yardbirds, Pink Floyd, *Revolver*-period Beatles, the Byrds, and the mad genius — Syd Barrett.

Tom Kazas was writing a lot of songs at the time, and these influences inevitably rubbed off. Numbers like *Horto*, with its repetitive bass and organ and busy guitar soloing, echo mid-sixties British sounds. Other songs emerging at that time charted broad improvisational areas with lyrics so simplistic they could be considered twee. But ain't that 60s?

At first, the Moffs didn't exactly set the world aflame. They were (and still are) erratic live, and crowds at their early shows were sparse — though word of mouth spread, and the numbers grew. Two Moffs' songs were included on Steven Danno's cassette/magazine '*Original Testament*' — *Untitled Protest* and *Once I Knew*. *Original Testament* also featured Salamander Jim and the superb Spectre's Revenge, and the release night (back in November 1984) did much to bolster all three bands' popularity. In December, the Moffs released their own six-track cassette — the initial pressing of 200 sold out so quickly that a further 300 were released, and these too sold out.

Earlier this month, the Moffs' first single was released. *Another Day In The Sun/ Clarodomineaux* are both Tom Kazas originals, and are arguably the best songs in their current repertoire. The single has been released on the Citadel label and 500 copies have already been sold overseas; it's also No 1 on RAM's *Australia Now* chart, no mean feat for a debut.

Unfortunately Tom Kazas has left Australia for a six-week visit to Greece, so the Moffs are unable to promote the single at the moment — though it hardly seems they've suffered for it. Before Kazas left, I discussed with him the dangers of being typecast according to their choice of cover versions...

You're big in the inner city, but have only played three gigs in the suburbs — to mediocre response. Do you want to be typecast as an inner city band?

"We've just got to play more in the suburbs, let them get used to the songs. Plus it's important *who* you play with. We played with the Screaming Tribesmen in Miranda and Sutherland, and the audiences were theirs. It's the support band syndrome — even if people like you, they won't make much of an effort to show it.

"We're an erratic band. People are always threatening to leave, or we'll have a fight backstage before we go on. We always play better after a fight, we get edgy and really play well. A good example of this was our record release night at Sydney Trade Union Club. We had arguments, but we still played well that night."

Do you think your image might tend to pigeon-hole you?

"In some ways, people already have. It gets annoying after a while. At first it was fun to play at the Strawberry Hill, but (*certain people — Ed.*) "put in stupid 'psychedelic' ads and things like that. We're not ashamed or embarrassed about it; the labels won't stop us doing what we want musically. Anyhow, we don't wear as much paisley now.

"People identify us with our covers, whereas to us the covers aren't as important as the originals. When we first wrote *Another Day In The Sun*, we thought it was entirely different to the rest of the songs we were doing; but because of what we are, people interpret it as a sixties psychedelic number. When I get back, we'll probably have close to a whole set of new material, so we'll get back to playing live quite heavily. We'd like to do more recording — possibly a mini-album. We don't want to leave our current songs behind, but we might have to depending on when we get to recording next."

DAVID TAMSITT

Tues 14 Dee Why Hotel
Wed 15 St George Sailing Club
Thur 16 Castle Hill RSL
Fri 17 Balmain Leagues Club
Mon 20 ANU (Canberra)
Wed 22 RMIT (Melbourne)
Thur 23 Deacon Uni
Fri 24 The Venue
Sat 25 The Venue
Sun 26 Pier Hotel
Tue 28 Tivoli

TINY TOWN

Small Name, Big Address

(Pic: Ian Greene/Camerartery)

TIME WAS when a return ticket to London also meant immediate heightened musical credibility here in Australia — almost regardless of how a band fared in the venues and studios of the Mater-Land, fact that they had *been there* could near automatically assure them of a few hundred extra dollars per show, plus a few extra bodies on the gigging floor.

Now that culturus cringus is no longer fashionable (nor London itself), bands will have to design a new calling card — Portobello Postcards are passe.

One band who can pass on the re-think is Tiny Town, who moved from Brisbane to London in 1978 for personal, not musical reasons and have resided there since. They've been responsible for setting up a record label (Elastic), and running a small venue called the Pindar Of Wakefield. They've done supports for Aztec Camera and the Go-Betweens, though despite these achievements they've remained largely invisible — except for two singles and a swag of reviews comparing them to the Go-Betweens.

Tiny Town's Peter Loveday and Lee Bradshaw were recently in Australia on a mixture of business-and-pleasure. Peter sees where the Go-Betweens comparison occurs, but needless-to-say doesn't agree with it. This is the businesslike answer...

"We do both work in the same area of expression, but the end result is completely different. Most of those associations occur in the minds of journos who have set themselves up as some sort of expert on Australian music... there's one working on every paper! Of course, their frame of reference is really narrow — they don't know about our background, where we come from. They think we are like the Go-Betweens because we're Australian and play guitar-based music; I suppose it's a natural supposition, but it's a bit ridiculous".

So who *does* inspire the Tiny Town mind?

"Jonathon Richman — I think he's terrific," says Peter. "He's original, and just fabulous." Lee relates how Peter wrote Jonathon a fan letter when *Jonathon Richman Sings For You* was released, and Richman wrote back to say: 'Thanks, see you in summer'. He did a tour *supporting* Orange Juice — of course Peter and Lee were there, front-row central. Met anyone else they've admired?

"Well, I met Tom Verlaine one night," offers Peter. "I suppose we've also met a few English people, but by the time you get to meet these 'names' who used to be heroes, you're past that stage anyway and it's not that important."

"Besides that, we're a bit shy," says Lee.

WHILE in Australia, the two Tiny Towners were looking at seeting up a distribution deal for their forthcoming debut album, released in June. Did I say *debut* album? What's taken 'em so long?

"It's just that every time we went to do it before, we spent too long deliberating about what we would record," says Lee. "Subsequently, we've got a lot of work that's now completely lost. We'll go through old cassettes and re-discover things we had totally forgotten about.

"But we did make a big mistake not releasing records; consequently, we're always thought of as a young band. You have to have a recorded body of work for any kind of credibility — you just can't walk up to someone and say you've been around since 1978 if you can't show them what you've done."

And will it mean the end of all the Go-Betweens comparisons for Tiny Town? Will Brisbane, Australia cease to be a musical millstone round their necks?

"There's much more to the album than anyone has seen or heard from this band before. The songwriting is shared, and I get to sing maybe half the songs. There's much more dynamics than we've displayed on our singles, both of which were prejudiced by cheap and fast production.

"It's a very intense record. I'd be really surprised if it bombed — if it went unnoticed. I feel it's a very creditable piece of work."

Ah yes, but what if it stiffs by default? Can Tiny Town rely on big-city radio to broaden their already ghetto-ised following? Does acceptance in Australia really matter to *anyone* these days? PETER: "Quite honestly, we're past the point where we can be dissuaded from doing what we are doing just because the album isn't greeted with acclaim. We'd just make another record!"

That's the beauty of the small-town mind... It can only expand from here, and so Tiny Town have chosen to grow without the help of local roots 'experts'. Is transportation a cure for culture cringe?

VIRGINIA MONCRIEFF

JUST A DRUMMER

— Or A Trick Of The Light

(Pic: Tom Takacs/Camerartery)

THE Palmer/Bourke Street squats in Sydney's Darlinghurst have for several years been a base of varied creative activity. Some has come to fruition, much has merely collapsed into drug-induced hyperbole.

The three-storey Gladstone Hotel has long been a home and workspace for artists, musicians, actors among many others. It has also served as base for Just a Drummer, soon to release their first single Sweat Saturation on Correct Records (a new offshoot of Hot).

DAVE (lead vocals/guitars): "I think our songs are the product of living around here, with all those contradictions — the dark bits, the light bits; the constant trafic noise is certainly an influence."

Their songs cover a similarly diverse range of subjects and dynamics. *The Reckoning* mirrors the shock effect of four friends being killed in a car accident a few years ago.

GLAD (trombone/keyboards/vocals) emphasises that the band's songs are optimistic — even in the aforementioned song: *'You had to make it a positive/rather than a negative reaction.'*

Another song, *August*, discusses the era/acid/heroin casualties mentioned in the opening paragraph... *'You can come collect your colours/And come collect your toys/But for all your motions of mystique/Not a damn thing done.'*

DAVE: "The real problem isn't heroin, it's people's loneliness and lack of self-esteem — people should be taught as they grow up to value things about their own personalities, rather than having ideals shoved down their throats."

These conflicts are reflected in the single, *Sweat*. Dave talks of leaving his parents and travelling around, returning home to the never changing question of "What is your goal?" and the lyrical maxim: *'You've got to sweat — you cannot shine.'* The work ethic and its inherent contradictions are denounced in a near-plethora of instruments and voices exhorting the unwary son, in chain gang fashion, to *'toe the line'*.

The upcoming filmclip for *Sweat* is described as "an aquatric adventure", to be directed by *DOUG (saxophone, vocals)* and Peter Mackay. The ligher side of the band is borne out through scenes shot at the bottom of the Boy Charlton Swimming Pool, the Gladstone ex-beer cellar and Balmoral Beach.

At Balmoral they rowed a boat around a headland to get away from people, which took some hours, only to reach a beach identical to the one they had left — so much for goals!

Doug sardonically nominates *"There's no rest for the wicked"* as one of his favourite Christian work-ethic tenets — "People are taught that they're incapable of achieving what they really want to," he laments. Then points out that *Saturation*, the other side of the single, is an instrumental protest song! The title refers to the saturation point on the population graph, and was written in a rowboat (yes, another!) on the Hawkesbury River. Rather than employing more obvious vocal lines normally incited by such a subject, the centre piece of the song is Glad's *trombone*, which varies from a plaintive whisper to screeches of indignation. Live, the song always garners a strong reaction! I once witnessed a huge, buzzing crowd at a party collectively stop, stare and LISTEN to every note, of its brassy attack.

"I need to learn different styles apart from Just A Drummer," says Glad, referring to outside activities. She has toured with the Laughing Clowns, and describes playing with the brass section of Louise Elliot and Di Spence as "one of the biggest thrills of my life." She's also done live and recording work with the Lighthouse Keepers, Bring Philip and Paris Green.

BEET (drums/vocals) is Glad's brother, and has played saxophone with a multitude of other bands — often in tandem with Glad — dating back to their childhood in the Dubbo Citizen's band, when they lived on an army base. He'd only been playing drums for five weeks when J.A.D. performed for the first time. The others describe him as a "real feature" of the band — he uses rhythms with a light touch, and is more than just the average armpit thumper.

Dave and Doug have collaborated before on various projects, such as a peformance at the 'Butcher's Exhibit' in Darlinghurst. Dave recorded a piece with wild percussion and piano interspersed with marching; over this, Doug (resplendent in pink tutu) played in a paddle pool with two others — the darkened room was backed by a wall of photographic paper which caught a silhouette of the scene when a flash was set off. Dave has also composed music for a video called *"Why did the girl cross the script?"*, which examined images of women in advertising.

Doug is also a painter. An avowed hater of post-modernism and an unabashed fan/creator of pop art/music, he takes part in at least one exhibition a year, and is currently working on "group paintings" with two friends — "it stops us becoming entrenched in our own styles" — a maxim he also applies to his music. At early rehearsals/jams, he used to "just jump around and have a few drinks".

Playing saxophone in Just a Drummer is his first musical endeavour, and he sings the tale of *Sammy The Snail* who *'crawled around and left a trail'*. Not surprisingly, he loves playing live — between slugs, that is...

"At first, I was mainly there for the entertainment value. I act the comic in real life to avoid dealing with people too seriously. The band wanted some of that variation."

RACHAEL (bass) is the newest addition to the band. Formerly of Wicca Hoot, the others credit her with injecting a calming influence and a fluidity that has changed the whole sound of the band. She also has an ongoing project with Melanie Oxley called the Sweet Nothings.

Dave, Glad and Beet were once in a band called Minor Fits. They were to play their first show at a party in Narrandera, in the south-west of the state. In order to rehearse, they hired a hall a week beforehand in a little shanty town just out of Narrandera, called Dixonville.

"The town was where all the mutants lived — all the people no-one wanted to know about. Eventually we gave a show for these people at the hall — they loved it, they had absolutely no prejudices. It was a very satisfying experience: they thought that we must have been outcasts too."

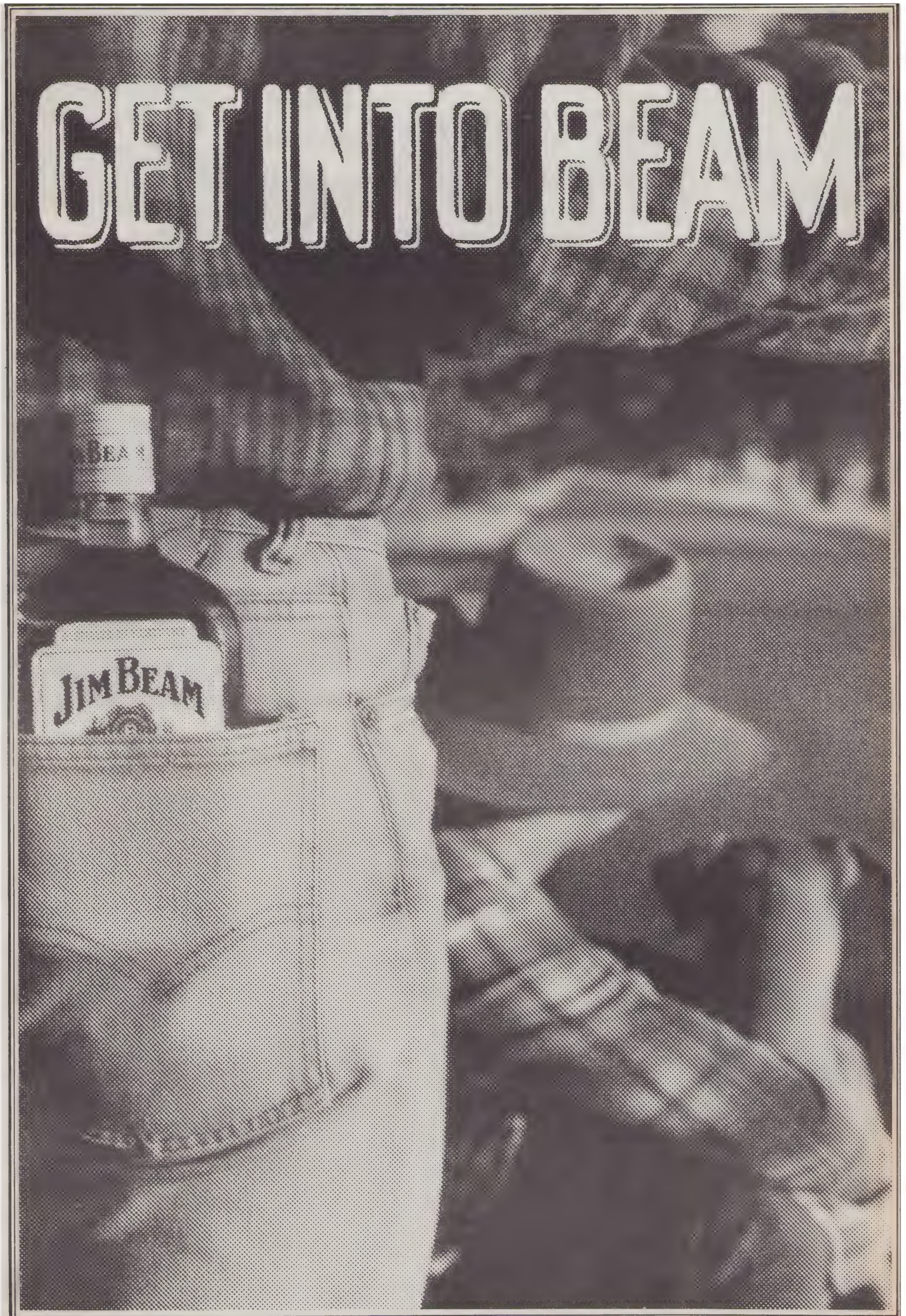
There's a pool of ex-country people living in the Darlo squats and the surrounding area, including some members of Just A Drummer. Doug puts forth his theory on the gravitational pull of city squalor...

"There's one 'weirdo' in each country town — some end up in jail, some get classified as insane, some go to Sydney where they discover that they're still quite capable of living, even if they don't fit the norm."

And there's so much to see and do in Sydney! Dave refers to J.A.D.'s *Bus To Town:* "You can get a fair bit of entertainment value just going somewhere by public transport — there's a lot of crazy people, especially in buses. People stand up the front of the bus and *perform.*"

After a brief spate of bus-passenger charades, we talk of the inevitable destruction of the squats (a new freeway is being built to save two minutes of traffic time), and discuss ideas for the final party before the Gladstone comes down, whenever that may be — a three-storey extravaganza with a huge searchlight on the roof, perhaps. In any case, Just a Drummer deserve your interim preservation order. Watch for *their* searchlight...

SIMON HUNT



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THE MILKY BAR KIDS

(Pic: Tom Takacs/Camerartery)

(FOOTNOTE: As of May 4, guitarist Johnny Hilliard relinquished his Milky Bar Kidship. . . No wonder he didn't front for the soundcheck!)

Though they're recognised as part of the revivalist rockabilly wave, these Kids have pegged their very own beach-space. JEREMY BENDER looks beyond the innocuous bandname to discover they can handle the most treacherous of prevailing conditions — whatever the fashion climate, the MILKY BAR KIDS transcend limitations. . .

AT FIVE p.m., the Manzil Room has yet to become riddled with its usual debilitated clientele.
It's *nice* in here. Two Milky Bar Kids and a little gang of cohorts have the run of the place, as soundman and stage roadie attend to the technicalities of a soundcheck, inspecting the stage. In the midst of a gruelling work schedule there is always the odd diversion — like me, entreating half the band to confess to their lofty ambitions.

Paul Burton (double bass) and Patrick Laughrey (acoustic guitar, snare and hi-hat, vocals) inform me that John "Johnny" Hilliard (electric guitar) and Andrew Travers (acoustic guitar, snare & hi-hat, vocals) have skipped the soundcheck. For most groups, this form of truancy would be, *ahem. . .* unwise, but Patrick and Paul assure me that with the Kids' simple set-up, only half of the band need ever be present. A marvellous system of rostered leisure, if you ask me.

You see, the Milky Bar Kids deserve all the rest they can arrange. Since their migration from Adelaide early last year, they've slotted gig after gig after gig. These guys take turns with their nervous breakdowns!

"We're playing pretty consistently," says Paul; "about four times a week. But it's not as much as we did when we *first* arrived in Sydney."

"Since then," intones Patrick, relaxing with his head on the table, "we've had five days off. No more."

"We're booked for the next four nights, then we've got six days off before the *next* two shows," continues Paul, as Patrick slowly heaves himself into an upright position. "Then we've got five days off, *another* two gigs and five more days off before the *next* gigs."

These brief pauses in the whirligig are keenly anticipated, although there will be little time to loll about.

"Our repertoire hasn't changed much — mainly because we haven't had time to practise, which is why we've got this time off," adds Paul.

No rest in the Milky Bar camp, and the frantic activity's not only pitched in the live area. . . They were recently featured on the *Regular Rockabilly* album, with the added distinction of having their two tunes — *Flaming Star/If You Remember Me* — also pressed as a seven-inch single to accompany the release.

What effect has the release of the single and album had on the band? Patrick is typically quick with his response. . .

"None whatsoever!" *(He pauses in sudden retrospect.)* "It's made us say, 'C'mon boys, we've got to kick arse a little bit more because we've got a record out!' And then we had to *tour*."

"The last tour was our most successful, mainly because people had heard of us," continues Paul eagerly. "It's got very little to do with actual sales — just the fact that we've had airplay. We just did Melbourne and Adelaide and it was great, an improvement on the time before."

"Brisbane knows us too," says Patrick. "That was our first visit up there. It was alright."

"I remember the first time we went back to Adelaide, it was pretty quiet," recalls Paul. "This last time, after the records came out, a lot of people were aware that we'd come to town."

"We were *rockstars,"* whispers Patrick in mock awe.

THE Milky Bar Kids began life in Adelaide as an itch that Andrew Travers was compelled to scratch. During his tenure as drummer — on full kit — with the Spitfires, he nurtured a nascent love for rockabilly. When the Spitfires crash-landed, he didn't waste time in assembling the outfit in his mind's eye. Johnny Hilliard, a perennial entertainer on the local scene (the Jumpers, Avant Garbage, Merrie Melodies) and his housemate at the time, jammed casually with him. Soon Andy's hitherto undeveloped talent on the acoustic guitar matched his enthusiasm. Paul takes up the story. . .

"They found out about me because I was the only person in town with a double bass."

"A *known* person," quips Patrick sarcastically. "He could have been an old gentleman with one foot. . ."

"I'd only bought it two days before," restarts Paul, gesturing towards the massive beast itself lying near us on its side. "Patrick jumped in, just to add percussion and backing vocals at first. It had everything going against it — we played awfully, it was revolting, so we *knew* it was going to work. And it *did."*

Once Patrick's potential as a frontman emerged, the band settled into the format which Sydney audiences are now enjoying. Johnny and Paul flail away on either side of the stage, while Andrew and Patrick swap roles throughout each show. One mans the hi-hat and snare while the other, brandishing a common acoustic guitar, sings the song. It's unusual and highly entertaining — Andrew and Patrick keep audiences guessing simply because their styles are so different. Andy stands squarely at the microphone and has the almost tutored voice of a 50s crooner (albeit hoarse). Patrick, on the other hand, is the image of abandonment as he plays up the histrionics in every song he tackles. He balances on the balls of his feet like a vulnerable young larrikin — a Beatle to Andrew's Elvis. There's no favouritist choice to be made, although Patrick's rendition of *Jeepster* never fails to remind me how exhilarating rock and roll can be.

Lungs are lungs, however, and they do involuntarily conk out now and then. I reminded Patrick of a tantrum he threw last year at Adelaide's Sunset Strip. . .

"That was a beauty! I was just sick to death of touring with bronchitis and having to sing and drum. I'd had it up to *here*. That's happened a couple of times. It's really unfortunate when I lose my voice — I don't want to be onstage when I can't sing, because it's the only thing I can do any good at."

THE Milky Bar Kids have set a fine example to others in their hometown — notable both for its good music and thwarted ambitions. Having survived the transplantation and progressed as an organism, how does a band with four determined individuals stay together? What force bonds them as one?

"We need the money," groans Patrick.

"We *are* all dependent on the band for our income," adds Paul. "That's a fact. Basically we try to keep pretty honest as to what we all want from the band. We try to get everyone to say what they feel about it all, and if there's a problem we try and work around it — allow for what *everyone* wants. If someone says they don't like this band, it's fine. If they don't want to pursue something, we say 'Okay. What's wrong and why?' We'll sit down and try and discuss it as best we can.

"Of course," he concedes, "it's not always as sensible as that — but we try."

For these two, the chums-from-way-back, the Milky Bar Kids is their passport to long-held visions of rampant creativity.

"It's school for me." Patrick offers me a leading glance and continues. . . "You've got to understand that. Before this I could never *really* sing up front with a band; the Hop did seven gigs, the Good, the Bad & the Ugly did two *(his previous bands).* That was Adelaide — it was nothing. I've learnt so much."

Paul is just as pleased with his personal progress. . .

"I've started doing other things on the bass, and the band can accommodate this. We've pulled away from what we were doing a year ago; we're a lot rockier now. Stuff that's perhaps a lot more radical could easily be added to our set."

The Kids' repertoire has however remained almost static since the big move, due to their rigorous performance schedule. At first, playing five or six nights a week, time off was time off. Even with a reduced workload, they still rarely have the time to work in new material.

"The way we play the same songs, though, has changed considerably," Paul insists." Totally, in fact."

What with *Flaming Star/If You Remember Me* having been seven months in the can, a certain stagnation is inevitable — which our two heroes assure me will soon be remedied. During their upcoming days off, few as they are, they'll throw themselves into rehearsals to add to the ammunition. Paul shoots enthusiastic. .

"We can branch off into anything we want to, basically, although I'm always going to stick on the double bass. We're going to do some more recording soon and make an EP. It won't be rockabilly; it'll have slap bass, but we won't do rockabilly tunes at all. Andrew will sing one of his, John's going to be doing one, Patrick's going to do one and I'll do one too. It'll make a really good EP — if only for the fact that there'll be contrast on it, a lot of variety. Each of us is so different."

"We fly off into a reggae, jazz or heavy metal number — things like that, any time we want," Patrick proclaims brazenly.

"I've been doing some recording for the band by myself," continues Paul, "putting down bed tracks, playing with ideas. Hopefully we'll make this record soon. . . . in the next couple of months."

"We've got to sort a few things out within the camp before we get locked up in some studio, you know?" It's almost a veiled appeal from Patrick, but it bodes little ill for the future. . .

'Cos the Milky Bar Kids are blessed with a 'divisive unity'. Unlike most bands you'd have the chance of seeing in your neighbourhod, the sum is great but the parts are greater. Four individuals, four separate talents, an EP with one precious song from each of them — but is it a recipe for disaster as far as the group identity is concerned? Not necessarily. . .

Each of the Kids is partial to playing in part-time outfits, providing the release which — for the sake of this band's stability — is probably vital.

"Andrew's got the Happening Thang," chuckles Paul, "which is his little country outfit with his girlfriend Kathy and a few other people. I just branched off with Toni (Allaylis — Jaguars' vocalist and Regular stablemate) in a band which is going to be gigging in about six weeks. There's another group I'm doing some stuff with as well. Patrick's in on those."

"I'll still sit at home and make things out of clay," he replies, subtly poking fun at his partner, "and Johnny draws."

While Paul laughs, Patrick remembers one last detail. . .

"We've got something else new," he blurts out, turning to Paul. "Shall we mention that?"

"*No!*"

Almost instantaneously, their offshoot band — hi-hat, snare, Toni Allaylis and all — are up on their feet, blasting out a tune. Without my noticing, a chap had assembled his drums near us while another pulled on an acoustic guitar. The resulting sound-swell, embellished by no less than four vocal parts, moves me and seems almost disembodied in an otherwise crypt-like Manzil Room.

As I leave I regard Patrick, harmonising at the top of his lungs, while Paul, smiling mysteriously, slaps and coaxes that big lump of wood. They're not such 'individuals' after all — all sense of self disappears once they're onstage together, just as surely as this room/tomb will be filled with dancing flesh united in one joyous mass a matter of hours later.

THE MOODISTS head back to England this month, still largely ignored at home . . . Call it lack of promotion, bad dress sense — but don't call it deserved neglect, says CLINTON WALKER.

strike out the (IN)DIFFERENCE

Graney & Miller (Pix: Francine McDougall)

THEY blow into town like crazy insects drunk on sherbet. They drive by night. They hit the dives and they live by the seat of their pants (leather, crushed velvet or denim regular). They trade their wares — they play rock'n'roll, like no rock'n'roll you ever heard.

"Like, we have an idea of our band," drawls Moodist singer Dave Graney characteristically out of the corner of his mouth; "and the distance between people's idea of us and our idea of what we're doing is incredibly great. That's what I want to *change*. Because what people know about us is basically what they've read about us, more people have gotten an idea about us by reading about us rather than hearing us."

So what am *I* supposed to do?

'Maybe you've got some problems so bad you can't move from your couch/You should go see this guy John he's in town for two nights. . . See John/Slip him some of your hard-earned frog-pelts/And let him feel bad for you/See John he's cryin' for two nights/He's guilty he's singin'/He's yours all yours all yours/See John — See John.'

WELL, that's Dave's story anyway. Maybe the Moodists strike me different. Maybe the other members of the group — Steve Miller, Chris Walsh and Clare Moore — don't see it the same way as Dave. After all, it was Graney himself who once told me: "The only thing is that everybody in the band *comes out* in the band".

But should I be writing about the Moodists at all anyway? Lest I further propagate a false image? You should be listening to them for yourself.

The Moodists had a single out in Australia over summer, *Enough Legs To Live On*, but it's symptomatic of their malaise that you probably weren't aware of it. And their album of last year, *Thirsty's Calling*, was equally overlooked despite its excellence. Radio won't touch the Moodists, so only critics (writers) are left to lend a voice.

Both their last two discs were on Virgin in Australia; as the result of a roundabout connection, this may partially explain the Moodists' obscurity. Having made their fine debut mini-album (*Engine Shudder*) for Melbourne independent Au-Go-Go Records in 1983, the Moodists sufficiently impressed visiting Englishman Dave Kitson that he signed the band to his label, Red Flame. The Moodists immediately made a beeline for London. It was there they cut *Thirsty's Calling*, and when it was released it received critical garlands — yet it sold in unspectacular quantities, and Moodists' gigs attracted only modest attendances. Still, their position seemed secure enough. They pressed on.

Because Red Flame was distributed in England by Virgin, the Moodists automatically became Virgin property in Australia . . . and I think the local reps weren't even aware this was an Australian band. The Moodists' 'failure', however, cannot be blamed entirely on record companies — as even Dave Graney will concede . . .

"Our music isn't mainstream anyway. It's very difficult, again because of our image as being some sort of . . . well, we're not looked on as being avant-garde, it's just a crazy mixture; we're supposed to be aural finger-painters or something." Graney giggles to himself. ". . . Drunken savages scrawling messages on walls of hotel bathrooms. Stuff like that. Primitive artists.

"I don't think we've ever been given a *chance* to reach a wider audience. You have to have a record company who'll put your records in shops and let people know you're around."

With the intriguing single *Enough Legs To Live On* out but barely about, the Moodists made the prodigal return home last December. They landed a choice gig supporting Public Image Ltd. on their Australian tour and turned in some devastating performances, but still were only met with indifference from an ultimately baffled captive audience.

May I describe my vision of the Moodists at that stage? Behind the drumkit, beneath a shock of orange ringlets, Clare Moore whips up rolling thunder. Bassist Chris Walsh, top to toe in leather, a beery malevolence in those glistening eyes, plants himself as immovable as a centre-half-back. Hard steel basslines like a 'runaway tank' complete a monstrous rhythmic substrata.

The Moodists then boasted two guitarists: Mick Turner, who has since left the band, is pale and gaunt — almost inanimate — yet he produces driving, thick lines. Fresh-faced Steve Miller, who himself does a great line in lame Western shirts, prowls the stage with a lonesome dementia — shaking his guitar, kicking the amplifier, knowing exactly when and when not to play, punctuating the melange with jagged outbursts.

Then there's The Singer. Out front, Dave Graney does a bump'n'grind in slow-motion, a perverse charm dance — 'Groiney', he has been called — while his vocals float and weave, soaring, swooping, stumbling, stabbing.

Well, that's how I saw it anyway; and I don't think it's unfair on the Moodists. What I'm not about to do is describe it as 'dark music obsessed with sex, violence, death and cars', which is the usual appraisal. No. It might be about *release*, though — I will say that much. There is also deliberate self-parody in the Moodists, which is not only healthy but possibly essential.

"I think it's a lot to ask of an audience to just stand there and admire you," Graney says. "To me, the basic premise of a song is to be *thrilling*. I don't think it's especially important for someone to receive an idea totally directed by the person who had it in the first place. If you allow people's imagination to run free, it can be a lot more potent."

'Everybody might get a little lonely/Everybody might get a little sad/Everybody might feel a little happy/everybody, don't tell her/Everybody's lookin' for a fence, maybe two, by their lives/Everybody's somewhere else — out.'

***— Everybody, Don't Tell her* (the Moodists)**

LAST week, the Moodists departed Australia again for Blightly. Same old road, but their stay here has seen some changes take place. The Moodists' road is not only holy but also, it seems, nearly always bumpy. Second guitarist Mick Turner is no longer with the band, but that was by mutual agreement. Dave Graney and Clare Moore finally tied the knot, with a church wedding in Clare's hometown Adelaide — that was by mutual agreement too. But it was a real blow for the Moodists to find themselves, as they do now, dropped by their English record company (Red Flame). Although this may transpire as a blessing in disguise, meantime it means the Moodists can only approach England armed with hope and the unflinching faith in themselves and what they're doing that disallows their relent.

(Pic: Tom Takacs/Camerartery)

"I think this period in Australia has been of more value to us than the whole time we spent overseas, although that was a lot of fun. Just being so low, and having your face rubbed in the mud." Graney giggles again at his own predicament. "Nothing like a good mud-pack.

"I can really appreciate that Howlin' Wolf song, *Down In The Bottom*. I dunno, we've had . . . I mean, we're pleased with the music we're playing now, we're just in the midst of a lot of business tangles. We'd just like to have things a little more *organised*. Which is why we're going away, to organise something. That's about as far as I can look ahead. I don't feel personally very depressed or anything, I don't feel embittered. I mean, there are a lot more people who are worse off than me — like friends of mine in bands in Melbourne and Sydney, and they just can't even get anywhere to play."

I spoke to Dave Graney whilst the Moodists were in Sydney to play two farewell gigs at the decidedly downmarket Yugal Soccer club. Of course, the Moodists never enjoyed a reputation as a particularly communicative bunch off stage — they are a notoriously 'difficult interview'. It's a part of the pop process they feel uneasy with, for reasons veering between modesty (true) and the ever-present fear of misinterpretation, if not outright misrepresentation. But now, even though inherently no one Moodist assumes a higher station than any one other, Dave Graney has taken it upon himself to present a more personable front to the public.

"In the past, we may have been just a bit precious — I dunno. I suppose we were loathe to talk about what we do because we didn't want to become self-conscious. I think it's okay to have a bit of mystery about what you do anyway. It's sort of fairly dull if you lay your cards on the table right from the outset. Somebody once asked Lydia Lunch whether she'd rather be intelligent or beautiful, and she said she'd rather be beautiful, because anybody can be a smartarse . . ." Graney grins . . .

At the Yugal, at odds with small, water-logged crowds and a hilariously incongruous backdrop mural of palm tree-lined Yugoslavian "beaches", the Moodists premiered a largely new set which was impressive indeed in its resolve. Steve Miller wisely opts not to fill the gap left by Mick Turner's departure, but rather his approach is spare — making full, evocative use of space. And without sacrificing any tensile strength.

"We're doing all these new songs," Graney began, "and we jokingly sent out these press-releases saying they have key-changes and stops in them, which is quite a big deal for us.

"I think bands just get a rhythm, after a while they reach a certain structure they can work with, and they explore those limits."

As such, the Moodists have lost none of the qualities they made their trademark from the first. If their new material could in some ways be considered more conventional, thus accessible, I can only say I never found it inaccessible anyway. The fault lies with an intolerant audience — the Moodists are not impenetrable; in fact, their appeal is elemental. Somewhat abrasive maybe, but timeless in spirit. After all, it would be fair to say that the major influences on at least the two boys from Mt Gambier — Dave Graney and Steve Miller — remain the classical sources. *Rock'n'roll*. Certainly Bo Diddley smiles benignly over this band.

"It strikes me that all there is for a person these days is to consume more and more worthless things," says Graney. "And I think rock'n'roll can be a very worthy thing — not in that sense like U2, but . . . something exciting and funny and out of the ordinary."

THE MOODISTS push the Big Beat so far and hard, it is almost hypnotic. That is their power. Their grace is to render a tune as subtle and understated as it is resonant. The Moodists etch a soundscape deep and wide.

"It's very basic, yeah, but it's not easily approachable," Graney adds. This is another reason why the Moodists haven't made that breakthrough. "There are no references to, say, 60s music, as some other bands have, or types of music, or obvious things people can recognise. We were just pushing this incredible sound out at people, so I don't really feel we made it easy for them to approach us.

"There's more compositional direction now. The new songs we're playing live at the moment are more *considered*, and varied. I just want to have more economy, and clarity."

When the Moodists take on England this time, it will be as a wiser band, aware equally of their own greater potential *and* all the hurdles in front of them.

"Music and the rock'n'roll industry is just designed for thieves to come in and fleece people, which is okay by me, but . . . it's designed so you can communicate with large numbers of people, or so the idea goes — of course, a few bands like us have run into a few problems. It's an avenue for more sorts of ideas to be put into the mainstream of life, and most other avenues are closed."

The Moodists sweat real sweat, laugh real hearty, cry real tears. Cut them and they bleed. I hear all that in the Moodists. And in the world of pop, such as this is sadly uncommon — yet any art (popular or otherwise) should be nothing less.

Well, that's my story anyway.

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Could this be the NEW ORDER we knew? Engaging, open, friendly even? At least JON CASIMIR thought so, even if he did wake up a sleepy BARNEY ALBRECHT for this ultimately rewarding phone interview.

WELCOME TO SUNSHINE VALLEY!

(Pix: Kevin Cummins)

"I'VE had a bit of trouble with my garden. I'm depressed. I've got drainage problems, and my garden's full of water. It's like a lake at the moment. It's not rained for a while, but my garden's *still* full of water — it's like the Somme out there!"

Won't the council clean that out for you?

"No, they won't. I have to pay for it all myself, and I'm having a lot of trouble with bills. . ."

For Bernard "Barney" Sumner (alias Albrecht, alias Dicken), it was not a wonderful start to the day. Just out of bed — it was 12 midday in Manchester — and with the state of his garden to worry about, he found himself speaking on the phone to someone from the other side of the world, someone he'd neither met nor heard of. When Stiff released New Order's [illegible] they'd got [illegible] this [illegible] a phone [illegible]

[illegible] New Order [illegible] Peter [illegible] Joy Division [illegible] Sumner [illegible] as a way [illegible] future [illegible] past.

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

THE question of where to begin a story is always a difficult one when you're dealing with a complex chain of events. The story I want to tell begins on the morning of May 18, 1980 in a flat in Macclesfield (near Manchester), when Ian Curtis — then singer for Joy Division — took his own life. On that day, Joy Division were to have left England for their first tour of America, their second album and new single having been successfully completed. Their debut album had been released a year earlier to a platitudinously rapturous reception, and it had seemed certain that the band were about to break into much bigger circles.

It is a matter of history that *Closer* and *Love Will Tear Us Apart* went on to be sizeable hits for them in Britain, and brought the band to notice in far-flung corners of the globe — such as our own.

Ian's death only served to validate the growing romantic legend that was wrapping itself around the band — people were taking Joy Division to heart with a religious fervour, principally because of the evocative, cathartic music they had produced. A legion of fans sprang up, clutching Joy Division records to their chests and avowing "I've always been into them."

For the three remaining members of the band — Peter Hook, Steve Morris, and Bernard Sumner — the first band meeting after Curtis's death was a painfully short one. There was no decision to be made about the future: they would continue. Honouring a previous agreement to change the name if anyone left the band, for whatever reason, they became New Order. It was a name that meant nothing in particular. As Bernard later pointed out, it was chosen from a list of ideas they had — it could just have easily been the Sunshine Valley Dance Band. However, the name only exacerbated the [illegible] had always [illegible] dispelling fascist overtones. Finding it ridiculous as well as [illegible] the band ignored such criticism — only confusing the matter in the eyes of their accusers.

So it was no surprise that they abruptly disappeared from public life. Their always-strained relationship with the British press was effectively terminated, and they went about the business of rebuilding in private. Their first demos as New Order were recorded in July 1980, and after one or two secret dates at home, by September they were ready to fulfill their ambition of going to America.

On their return, they asked guitarist/keyboardist Gillian Gilbert — a friend of Steve's — to join the band. Her only musical antecedents were a Manchester punk band, the Inadequates, and the fact she'd been playing guitar on stage with Joy Division for one song — which [illegible] Serious [illegible] Peter [illegible] Joy Division [illegible] Sumner [illegible] New Order's [illegible] *Everything's Gone Green* [illegible] Sumner [illegible] exasperation [illegible] a little reflection at the hour of day. Indeed, it turned out to be one of the most [illegible] I've ever done. He speaks very slowly, in Mancunian drawl that takes half a second to decipher, but he's quite [illegible] are pleased with [illegible] records. Them, [illegible]

New Order's first [illegible] Movement [illegible] with [illegible] and nothing [illegible] The [illegible] themselves [illegible] but to many, [illegible] in the production [illegible] was claustrophobic and [illegible] places it was as much a reaction [illegible] backwards as it was a tentative step forwards. The feeling of [illegible] that pervaded it only cemented the band's unfounded reputation as morose individuals. It was to be the last time they worked with Hannett.

It wasn't until April of the following year that the band broke the shackles and emerged as a band on par with their previous incarnation. The release of *Temptation*, their first self-produced single, pointed to romanticism of a different sort — uncluttered, sweet, and *open*. To my mind it is still their greatest song, and its crystalline sound made it one of the most memorable records of 1982. It was their only release that year, much of the time being taken up with recording the follow up to *Movement*.

Blue Monday, their fourth single, saw release in April 1983, and became their biggest hit to date. Its colossal production showed most other synth-dance bands of the era *exactly* what they'd been doing wrong, and though it was only released as a twelve-inch single, it spent several weeks in the Top 10. In fact, it became the biggest selling twelve-inch single of all time, shifting units in excess of half a million in Britain alone.

The album that followed, *Power, Corruption And Lies*, saw them beating a path to the forefront of electronic wizardry, daring contemporaries to follow. The album is as fresh now as it was when released, and it's surprising to see how many current charting artists have plagiarised slabs of its sounds and ideas. The album reached No. 4 on the British charts, and became entrenched on local FM radio for the rest of the year. Its release also marked the beginning of the band's renewed relations with the press.

In the middle of that year New Order travelled to America firstly to tour, and to work with disco producer Arthur Baker. The result of the collaboration was a single, *Confusion* which successfully pre-empted the Hip Hop craze by more than a year. The band were forced to work to a tight schedule, having to write and record the song in the studio with Baker hurrying them along each time they looked like slowing. The single bemused fans with its chanting and syncopated beats, and once more released only on twelve-inch, it featured four versions of the one song — thirty minutes in all!

1984 was a relatively quiet year for the band, with only the release of two singles to show for it. *Thieves Like Us* was a grower — a slower, less moody song than previous singles. Co-written with Arthur Baker, it signalled a return to the drum 'bass axis of the band, with a markedly sparer use of synthesisers and sequencers. *Murder* was a different case entirely. It was the eleventh song recorded for *Power, Corruption And Lies*, and unlike anything else on the record, it was shelved and released last year on the Belgian arm of their record company, Factory. A brutal song, it featured some of Steve Morris's strongest drumming yet, and some very *strange* vocal covers.

With their new album — *Low Life* — about to be released, and its single *The Perfect Kiss* on the cards, New Order are coming to Australia for one of the shortest tours on record. It's a cold and wet night as I talk to Bernard Sumner on the phone. In Manchester it's only twelve o'clock, breakfast-time for anyone in the music industry, and he's only just got up himself. The throes of recent slumber are evident in his voice, and he tells me that he's never really awake before five o'clock.

For a man who's known to dislike interviews, Bernard was engaging and open. [illegible] a little reflection at the hour of day. Indeed, it turned out to be one of the most [illegible] I've ever done. He speaks very slowly, in Mancunian drawl that takes half a second to decipher, but he's quite [illegible] are pleased with [illegible] records. Them, [illegible]

It's been two years between *Power, Corruption And Lies* and *Low Life*. Why such a long time?

Basically, because we've been playing a lot around the world. We've done two or three tours a year in different countries, and when we haven't been touring, we've been playing a lot of one-off gigs in England. It's cut into our rehearsal time — we've just been too busy. *Low Life* has been finished for three months now; we've just been waiting for the *sleeve* to be finished."

THE PACKAGING ORDER

PETER SAVILLE, a graphic artist from Manchester, has been responsible for all Joy Division/New Order covers since 1979's *Unknown Pleasures*. His elegant sleeves have contributed almost as much to the beauty of the band as the music itself. They are, however, somewhat terse — if not downright esoteric.

Take for instance the cover to *Power, Corruption And Lies*. . . The front, featured a painting by Fantin-Labour, while the back consisted of a colour wheel. The inner sleeve was black, except for some coloured edging and a little information on the artist. The data relating to the name of the band, the name of the record, the songs, the engineer and all the rest was tucked neatly away on the actual label of the record itself — great, if you can read while the record's turning. If you were clever, you could deduce that the colour wheel on the back cover had 26 segments, corresponding to the letters of the alphabet. If you were even *more* clever, you might notice that the coloured edging on the *inner* sleeve spelled "New Order Power Corruption And Lies."

When will Peter Saville have *this* cover finished?

He's done it. The sleeve's ready now, and the LP should be out really soon."

Does he always hold you up like this?

"It's not usually as bad as this." (*Bernard sounds exasperated.* "It's been ridiculous this time. It's taken him longer to do the cover than it took us to do the LP!"

So what's on this cover?

"It's four photographs of us. A photograph of Steve on the front, one of Gillian on the back, and me and Hooky on the inside."

You've been criticised in the past for not putting photographs or information about yourselves on record covers. Why do it now?

"We'd never done it before. We do everything once."

You're due to release the single *The Perfect Kiss* sometime soon. We first heard of its existence some eighteen months ago, and *Melody Maker* reported that it was finished last August. Have you had cover problems with that as well?

"No [laughs]. I don't know where *Melody Maker* got that from. I think they [illegible] that all because we hadn't been in the studio to record it with the [illegible] that didn't know what [illegible] of [illegible] *Perfect Kiss*. Really, I just [illegible] and [illegible] up something so we'd [illegible] an [illegible] to get the press."

Most of Saville's covers have little codings, secrets or messages built into the design. Does he tell you what they are or what they mean?

"Actually, a fan told me the other day that if you look at the cover of *Confusion* at an angle to the right, it spells 'New Order' and it does. It's never, ever, that I don't know! Peter Saville's actually really good, but he's so *fucken* slow."

You don't put your names on the covers, but have you ever thought of putting information on what instruments were played, just for those people who might be really interested in the music?

[illegible] best [illegible] Tomorrow [illegible] interesting [illegible] music [illegible] Tomorrow [illegible] interesting [illegible] music [illegible] Joy [illegible] Peter [illegible] Gillian [illegible] Hook [illegible] Bernard [illegible] Steve [illegible] Morris [illegible] Arthur Baker [illegible] just [illegible] Arthur [illegible]

How about a band like Severed Heads, who provide an address to write to for the technical information on the construction of their albums?

[illegible] happen [illegible] to [illegible] Cars [illegible] That's [illegible] where [illegible] you've [illegible] that [illegible] musicians [illegible] communicate with [illegible] ordinary [illegible] people. I know a few bands [illegible] here who are [illegible] the music scene, and I think you start writing your music aimed at other musicians and your music gets very technical. I'm not to get into that area.

Everything we do is geared towards the *public*, because we don't even consider ourselves good musicians. We can play, but we're just like . . . people who appreciate records. We listen to a lot of records, so therefore we're people who can *write* records. We're very anti-musician."

THE ORDER OF PRODUCTION

SINCE they split with producer Martin Hannett in 1981, New Order have produced themselves — excepting the *Confusion* venture with Arthur Baker. The results have been impressive, in that they have achieved a clarity and simplicity of sound that is admirably fresh. They have always been a band in the forefront of the new technology boom, and are constantly experimenting with new equipment: to do so, they pay themselves a reasonable wage from band funds and the rest goes into equipment purchase. Famed for the sheer amount of instruments used onstage, they now require twelve roadies to set up for them.

What makes *Low Life* a better record than *Power, Corruption And Lies*?

"I never said it was (*laughs*). I think it's just another record."

Are you progressing then?

"That's really hard for me to say. *Low Life* means as much to me as *Power*. . . did. Whether it's better or not. . . I don't think you can say that. It's like saying one tree is better than another — you just can't. If you look at two trees, like I'm doing now, one will be a different shape to the other — but it won't be better."

Is *Low Life* another self-produced effort?

"Yeah, we all produced it. The good thing about producing stuff yourself is that you end up more or less with what you want. The bad part is that after you finish recording you all tend to be pretty well knackered, and when you come to mix the song you've heard it a thousand times. Whether producing ourselves is the ideal situation or not I don't know, but we're pleased with the results."

Have you thought of collaborating again?

"Yeah, we have done. It would be good to work with someone else, but the only person I could think of would be Ennio Morricone. I'd like to work with him."

Why?

"Well, the first record I ever bought was one of his, and he really got me interested in music. I didn't have a record player 'til I was fifteen. Up 'til then I wasn't interested in music, and I only bought his album because someone had given me a record player . . . and I had to have something to play on it."

Looking back, what impact did Martin Hannett and Arthur Baker have on your music?

"A heavy impact . . . both. Them contributed a lot. They changed the music a lot to give it their sound, but the whole point is that if you employ a producer, you should give him a lot of room. You can't tell by doing so. You can't do this . . . can't do that, you can't chop this vocal to bits or [illegible] drum. If you're going to do that, then I think you should be prepared to [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

as possible on songs to keep at least some of the spontaneity. We finished a lot of the songs from *Lowlife* in the studio, so it was the first time we'd played them. I'd say it was about the first time I'd sung the vocals for 80 percent of them.

"When you do it that way, it's absolutely fresh and enjoyable, because you've never played it before. We used to do a lot of John Peel radio sessions in England, as well as a lot of demos. By the time we went into the studio to record an LP, we'd already recorded it two or three times. I don't think that's a good thing — when you go to record a single or an LP, it should be for the first time."

THE SONG ORDER

NEW ORDER go about songwriting in a typically individual way. Classing themselves as generally lazy people, they spend a lot of time in their rehearsal room just jamming around and waiting for something to happen. They tape the proceedings and then listen back to them later, picking out the passages that grab and piecing them together into songs. An interesting aspect of the songs is their nomenclature — with names like *ICB, Hurt, We All Stand* and *586*, they leave lots of room for speculation as to the meanings. There's even a rumour that Gillian once walked out of a studio in early Spring and exclaimed "Everything's Gone Green", which they then used as the title for the single they were working on.

Your songs tend to have cryptic titles. Do any of them have meaning or relationship to the songs?

"No. . . we just pick any title, anything that sounds good." *(We both laugh.)*

"We just come up with a load of names and say 'Oh, that sounds nice. We'll use it for this song.' And we do. That's how we work. I don't think titles are all that important, and they're damn hard to think up. It's a bit like picking a colour to decorate your house with *(laughs)*."

Have your songwriting methods changed at all over the last few years?

"Not really, no. . . Apart from the fact that we take the songs out live in a cruder form than we would have done. Years ago, we would have had a song basically finished before we took it out live. Now we take it out in a very crude form — say, all we'll have is a drum line and a sequencer line, and maybe an idea on the bass. Everything else we'll jam on top of it. It's good because it keeps it exciting. You know that when you're going to play that night you'll do this particular song, and you haven't really a clue what it's going to turn out like. You're taking a big risk, because it could sound *really bad*. When you come to that song you've got to try your best at it, otherwise you make a complete cunt of yourself. It's like taking a driving test on stage."

How do you write your lyrics?

"Well, I wrote some lyrics to a new song the other night. I just sat down at home very late at night, about two o'clock in the morning, and I took a sleeping tablet and drank some wine. I listened to the song over and over again but I couldn't get any ideas, so then I waited another couple of hours — till about four o'clock — when I just started getting ideas. I find that the more tired I get, the easier it is to write words for a song. I don't know if that's because the practical side of your brain switches off or what. . "

What are you tending to write about now?

"What happens to me, or what *has happened* to me, from being born to where I am now."

You seem to have been a lot more confident with your voice since *Temptation*. Are you becoming more confident with words too?

"I *enjoy* it more now. I actually enjoy sitting up all night. It takes a lot of effort to get started, but when I finish something and have a look at it, I actually like what I've done now. Whereas in the past I've felt a bit unsure about it, now I can see some sort of meaning in it for me.

"Some of the stuff on *Lowlife* was finished in the studio. Everyone would come and sit in the control room, the engineer would go out and we'd all listen to the song and come up with the lyric together. I'd say I write about 60 per cent of the lyrics and the other 40 percent we write together, which is a good way of doing it — brings you down to a common wavelength. about a song.

"In the beginning I used lyrics very abstractly. . . I guess I didn't like showing my personal emotions to the public. But now, I realise that if a song does have a meaning in it — even one that only I understand — then it's easier to remember the words."

THE LIVE ORDER

NEW ORDER's live shows have always been hit-and-miss affairs. When they toured Australia in November/December 1982, they were plagued by equipment failure, bad sound, and the fact that they were pretty well blotto by the time they hit the stage anyway. From recent bootlegs, it seems their shows are becoming consistently better — though many people are still unhappy when they find that the band plays for less than an hour, and doesn't do encores (often). The rationale for this is not one of arrogance or patronisation, it's merely that they believe they can say what needs to be said in under an hour and get off before they bore the audiences *or* themselves. And after all, encores are part of the 'don't-you-love-us' star system that they're so against.

How important is it to you that your material should be playable live?

"It's very important, 'cause we play live a lot."

Are there any songs you don't play live?

"Yeah, *Ecstacy* and *Murder*. . . anything with treated vocals and cut-up vocals. Like on *Murder* for instance, the vocals are cut up from loads of video tape — some from *Caligula*, some from *2001* some *A Clockwork Orange*, Anything like that we tend not to do live. We don't do *Ecstacy* because it uses vocoder, and they are difficult to use live."

From the tapes of your live shows that circulate around to this end of the world, it seems that you're less plagued by technical difficulties than you used to be.

"That's because up until three weeks ago, we've just had loads of spare equipment. If system A breaks down, we just throw a switch and cross over to system B and so on. Just recently, after *Lowlife*, we've upgraded all our equipment. Basically, the newer your equipment is, the less it breaks down."

Your shows are running longer now. Is 45 minutes no longer enough to get your message across?

"No, it's just that the individual songs are longer. We still play ten songs — we've always done that. No, that's wrong; we *used* to play nine songs, but everyone kept moaning at us; so we knocked it up to ten. The set lasts about 55 minutes now."

This is an exceptionally short tour you're doing here. . . What's the reason for that?

"We're going to more places. Last time we went we only went to Australia, but this time we're doing a gig in Hong Kong, then a few in Japan; then we're going into the studios for a week, then we're going to Australia, then New Zealand, Hawaii, Los Angeles and New York. So we're going right round the world really, and all in six weeks! We don't want to be away from home for a three-month tour or anything like that."

You seem to inspire obsession and blind devotion in fans. Do they ever bother you?

"No, I think it's good. It bothers me when I meet some of them, and they're. . . a bit *mad*, to say the least. Some of our fans are a bit peculiar, but not all of them. It's really up to them, innit?"

What sort of people turn up backstage?

"No-one, because we don't let anyone backstage. We occasionally get accosted outside gigs. I was the other day — insulted by a lad who had about 50 New Order LPs. We've only brought out three, so I don't know where these came from. There's so many bootlegs!"

WHAT sets New Order apart from so many other bands is their obstinate refusal to play any other games than their own. They stress that they are four ordinary people from Manchester who do what they want to do, when they want to do it, with the minimum amount of fuss and bother. Freed from the constraints of major contractual obligations, they are able to pursue a career on their own terms — and the way their records sell, it looks like they can continue indefinitely. Which is a shot in the arm for all those young bands who have the courage to stand by their convictions and do it their own way.

What confounds people is their apparently blase attitude towards all the conventions of the music industry. The simple fact is that they are content to make their own mistakes, and savour their own triumphs. In their five-year career, New Order have repeatedly redefined their own parameters and avoided the categorisation so easily lumped on their contemporaries. Like the Doors and the Velvet Underground, New Order will be one of those bands still popular and emulated for a long time after they're gone, if they ever go. . .

As one way of wrapping this up, you're in a band that makes enough money to keep you comfortable, to buy new equipment, to get your next record out, and to run your life the way you want to. Does the idea of wider success or recognition appeal?

ALBRECHT: "Not to me it doesn't. I'm not really bothered about success. To me success is having a good time and doing what you want to do — it's not being dead famous or anything like that."

A NEW ALBUM

Low-life

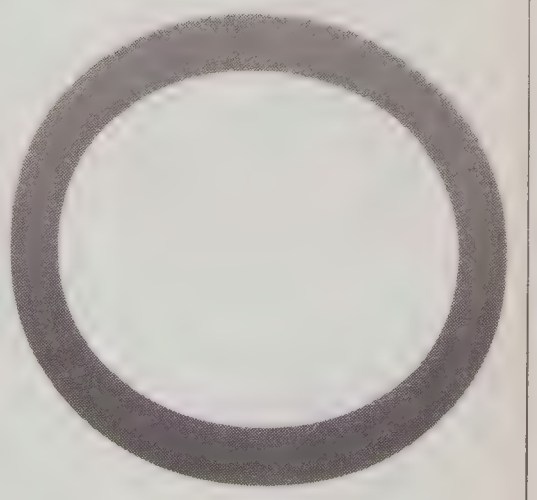
FACT 100

Love vigilantes The perfect kiss This time of night Sunrise Elegia Sooner than you think Sub -culture Face up

A NEW SINGLE

"The Perfect Kiss"

FAC 123



A NEW TOUR

PERTH, Canterbury Court. May 15th.
MELBOURNE, The Powerhouse. May 17th.
SYDNEY, Selinas. May 18th.
BRISBANE, East Leagues Club. May 20th.
AUCKLAND, N.Z., Logan-Campbell Theatre. May 23rd.

Factory Records Australasia

M & D BY CBS RECORDS AUSTRALIA LIMITED & EMI RECORDS NEW ZEALAND LIMITED

Human Pacing

Nick pumps up for Oz (Pic: SL/LFI)

THERE are two things you notice straight away when you meet Nick Kershaw. One is his height — or rather, lack of it. The other is the fact that despite the hit singles, the pin-up posters, the sell-out tours and the television specials, this man is an *anti-star*. He simply doesn't play the games.

Taking a break from rehearsals for his upcoming Aust tour, he talked with a comforting modesty, a single-minded concentration on the music he makes and a genuine disregard for the trappings that surround it if he lets them. Nik Kershaw is under no delusions about his own importance.

He'll admit to ambition, but at the same time he'll tell you: "I haven't got the paranoia that some people have got about being forgotten tomorrow. It just doesn't bother me that much. If it all finished tomorrow and I had to go and lay bricks, that's the way it's going to happen. I just see this as lasting as long as it lasts.

"My management and my record company might be planning ahead, they might have got me pinned down to December 4, 1987. I personally can't plan things like that; I wouldn't sleep at nights if I really worried about it. I'm not prepared to lose a lot of sleep for nothing."

Nik Kershaw is not impressed by the notion of the Pop Star?

"To a certain extent I resent the fact that what I look like is important to people," he sighed, glancing down at his ordinary black trousers and woolly jumper. "And I resent being thought of as a pop star who writes pretty tunes — most people don't think I play any instruments, or they think I probably don't sing on my records.

"Early on, people were accusing me of being a totally fabricated, manufactured thing. If anyone was going to manufacture a pop star, they'd pick someone who was amazingly good-looking, single and about five feet eight — and make them dance a lot. Anyone with two eyes in their head can see I'm not that. I'm *not* just a pop star. God knows what I am.

"The weird thing is trying to explain to people that my life is all very normal. Like if you're a bricklayer, it's like meeting another bricklayer. We're all doing the same job, we all know how trivial and fake some parts of it are, we all know the score, we've all got this little glint in our eye."

But despite his own friendliness and his assertion that "I haven't been really disappointed with anybody I've met so far in the music business," Nik remains wary of most people.

"You've always got this suspicion," he admitted, biting into a cheese and ham on brown. "You think maybe if you weren't so successful, you might not be treated so well. There's a lot of people you can't trust."

Away from work, Nik lives as normal a life as possible to imagine. He might venture out now and again to see Weather Report, Al Jarreau or De Danann, but generally, he prefers watching TV with his wife to prancing around posh clubs and parties.

"I'm shy," he explained, with a self-conscious grin. "I find it very difficult to make friends. I'm not shy of talking about music, but if I go to a party and somebody starts talking to me about Dutch Elm Disease, I just shrink back."

Generally, Nik tends to stick with his oldest mates.

"My real friends are the people I used to go down the pub with. Sometimes I have to give them a kick and say 'Hey, it's me, I haven't changed', but I do feel guilty sometimes.

"Most of my friends are musos, and I get this horrible feeling of guilt when I meet them. I've been successful, I've been very very lucky and I'll be doing exciting things... off to Australia next week, and they'll be saying, 'Oh, we've got this band but we haven't actually got any gigs yet'..."

MUSICALLY, Nik Kershaw is capable of anything these days. He freely admits that his first album was deliberately commercial — "it was made up of songs that I put on the demo when I was looking for a contract, and I cringe at bits of it now" — but the second album carries more than a few surprises.

Would you believe, for example, a *heavy metal track*? The racy *You Might*, with its careering melody and tough guitars, proved an eye-opener for me alongside the more typical pop of *Don Quixote* or the deliberately laid back East Coast feel of *City Of Angels*.

Nik Kershaw recognises no boundaries himself. As he says: "I don't think directions are important. Next day, I might be a country and western singer.

"This album is for *me*. Music *should* be written for yourself. If you don't respect and love it yourself, nobody else is going to. At the same time, though, you have to try not to go totally the other way and get introverted, because then it becomes a masturbation process."

Lyrically, Nik has continued to steer clear of obvious boy-meets-girl cliches and presents us instead with a series of what he calls 'observation pieces' — most of them based on opinion rather than personal experience. *City Of Angels*, for instance, is about... LA!

"This is my point of view about LA — never having been there," he declared, finishing off a second sandwich. "It's about the shallowness, the synthetic side of it. I feel like it doesn't exist, that city. It doesn't *seem* to. On the other hand, I might go there next year and think it's a really great place.

"Very few of my lyrics are from personal experience. Some of them may be totally inaccurate. People might come back and say to me 'the rain forests *aren't* actually being destroyed by acid rain', and I'll say 'Oh, my mistake, sorry mate'. All of the songs are done with a sense of humour. If you don't know that, you might think them pompous or preachy — but I think most of the fans are aware of the humour."

Save The Whale speaks for itself ("I'm definitely going to be accused of being pretentious"), while the smoothly flowing and infectiously tuneful *Wild Horses* offers one of Nik's more unusual stories...

He's not exactly tall, though neither is he short on an athlete's skill in dealing with the sometimes breakneck pace of the PopOlympics. More riddles and hurdles tackled by CAROL CLERK, on the eve of NIK KERSHAW's away-game in Australia...

"It's about a businessman complaining about his lot... 'I've got this to cope with and that to cope with, my wife's divorcing me, etc, etc'. And then you get a geezer who's living in a tent in the middle of Dartmoor complaining because it's cold and he's run out of food. But if you said to the geezer in the big office, 'Come and live in a tent in Dartmoor, you can get away from all your problems', he'd say 'Wild horses wouldn't drag me away'!

"It's basically that most people end up doing what they're used to. The leopard can't change its spots — you can't take people from one thing to another, because they'd be totally lost."

NIK KERSHAW is the first man I've met for, oh, *months*, who's somewhere around the same height as myself: not much more than five feet off the ground. But being small has sometimes had its advantages:

"At school, I managed to be a member of two rival gangs without getting beaten up," he recalled. "But one of the bad things about being small is that nobody takes you seriously. I get treated like a kid — and I'm nearly 27 years old. I've had so many journalists come round and start talking down to me... 'What colour are your socks?'. It takes them a while to figure out that I'm not actually 16 years old, and I can think for myself."

Nik is certainly no huge fan of the music press: he sees it as a good idea gone mad.

"There's a certain section of the music press that's totally self-destructive," he insisted. "Then there's the *NME*... it's got an editorial obligation to *hate* everything I do. If I came out with the greatest thing since sliced bread, there's no way they could admit I'd done it. That sort of thing worries me for the sake of the music press. They're not telling people the *truth*."

Further, Nik refuses to be wounded by the insults of *musicians* he admires.

"I've got a great deal of respect for Malcolm McLaren," he stated. "I think *Madam Butterfly* is great! And Malcolm McLaren had a go at me. He said he'd rather be a plagiarist than Nik Kershaw... obviously I'm the lowest of the low. But, fair enough: different strokes for different folks.

"It doesn't really upset me, though. I've got a record company I get on very well with, and I've got a personal ambition which is to keep on getting better all the time."

Anti-star? Well, not quite antipath...

ATTACK OF THE KILLING JOKE

INESCAPABLY INSCRUTABLE

Jaz Coleman (Pic: Tom Takacs/Camerartery)

(Pic: SR/LFI)

THE PR woman from the record company had been most concerned about the interview. "What sort of mood was he in?" she wanted to know. Solidly pleasant, actually — the perfect English gentleman. Had he been any different on his other interviews?

"Oh yes. He started saying all sorts of sadistic things to one interviewer — said that if they weren't in a group they'd all be mass murderers."

Now that's more like it. All is well in the world of Killing Joke.

Oddly, dismemberment never came up as a topic of conversation when Jaz Coleman came on the line from Japan; dog's entrails didn't even come into it. The man who recently asked a *Smash Hits* reporter, "Do you want me to smash your face in or something?" was clearly in the most generous of moods.

"In actual fact, Killing Joke are the friendliest bunch of guys you could ever meet," clarified Coleman with all the menace of a slice of quiche. "*If* the person interviewing is *genuine* in their approach, and is sincerely interested in the content and personalities in the band. . . We have a defensive system that has ensured our own continuity for the last five and a half/six years, and that's important.

"Another point is that my colleagues and I are relatively astute people. I think this frightens many people in interviews. Those interviewers who are intent on undermining us, and that is their sole objective — we give them a hard time. Heh! And there again there are people who really are quite genuine and want to genuinely think about the music, and we give them an easy time. They can even share our drinks with us! Like you, Lynden, we know you. . ." (His voice crumpled into a cackle that could have meant anything, and probably did.)

Killing Joke — a group so Gothic you expect gargoyles to be perched on them —should have landed in Australia by the time you read this, scaring the native population with the usual glowers, inspiring thoughts of rats' tails being plucked off. The Killing Joke sound is characteristically one of several small tactical nuclear explosions knitted together; an ineluctable (*'inescapable' — Ed.*) noise, to be sure. It will be interesting to find out what Australians make of them.

Sales of their current *Love Like Blood* single indicate a positive response. Taken from their sixth LP, *Night Time,* it shows a Joke exploiting the possibilities of a more commercial production without letting it exploit them. Hard nuts might even accuse them of going soft, a suggestion that finds little favour with Coleman.

"I wouldn't call that soft at all. I think it's more accessible, I'll say that. But definitely not commercial, I couldn't call any of the music on *Night Time* commercial. What I like about it is that if you listen beyond the initial intensity of the music, you find a sound that is really quite beautiful; and the mix we have on *Night Time* is perfect for presenting a new style of music, a new sound to ears that have not been accustomed to this. We mixed for the radio, frankly, and it's paying off."

This was all frighteningly reasonable. Quotes like this are the sort of thing that get cub reporters hauled in front of the Ed. because they've failed to "get the story". The U2 card would have to be played. They *hate* U2. Remind him that they've been compared to the Irishmen. . . that should wind him up.

"Well. . . I can understand it," begrudged Coleman, like a clergyman who'd been asked for his opinion of a vicar in a neighbouring parish. Which was odd considering the attitudinal gulf between the bands was akin to that between Jesus and the Devil.

"I mean, Geordie (KJ's guitarist) sounded like U2 before U2 were ever around; that is, his guitar sounds big and it is quite bell-like and melodic. However, it's *bigger* and it has Geordie's hallmark on it, it has more Geordie's intensity than U2. I think it's very different. If that's the nearest comparison they can come up with, I'd estimate we were something of a unique band."

What reactions were the group getting from the new breed of fans attracted by *Love Like Blood?*

"We're not interested in trend or fashion anyway, so we encourage all types of music appreciators to come and listen to Killing Joke. I dunno, I find that people who like *Love Like Blood* also like a lot of material off the album and from our repertoire, you know. So yeah — there's definitely a crossover there, and I think it's good that we've moved out of this exclusively cult bracket, if you like. We want to popularise our fanaticism. *Heh heh. I see Killing Joke as being one of the* biggest cult bands."

Jaz was definitely fired up by the group's experience of Japan.

"I think Westerners could learn a lot from these people's manners," he declared. "They've been treating us like *emperors.* For example, as soon as we arrived in the hotel room after a long flight, there was like three bunches of flowers — all sorts of presents, and saki and Sony Walkmans there in front of us. They go out of their way to please you; they can't understand the idea of failing you or not pleasing you, it seems like everything depends on it. They're a very honourable people."

The works of Yukio Mishima — the Japanese author who shocked the world by ritually disembowelling himself — turn out to have been the inspiration behind *Love Like Blood.* "You know, the samurai in modern day Japan." Coleman explained that many of the writer's epics were "in alignment with Killing Joke ethics". We were onto the entrails at last. But what of Australia?

"Never been there before — it sounds quite a good atmosphere. They like their live music, so they'll have no problem with Killing Joke. I think they're used to heavy metal. The style of Australian bands I find dated and horrible — I don't mind saying, you know — but it should be pretty exciting, I think. . ."

Before winding up, Coleman revealed an unexpected ambition: "Obviously England and Europe are very depressing compared to somewhere like Australia, where there's not the same sort of struggles and pressures. That's why a lot of people are moving over there. *I'm* interested in New Zealand."

Why?

"I'm married to a Kiwi."

Considering he once ran away to Iceland (we'll save *that* story for another time), I'd have thought it was more like some peculiar attraction towards geysers. But then again, you never know. This is Killing Joke.

LYNDEN BARBER

NOT-SO NASTIES

THE STRANGLERS
Incorrigibly Unpredictable?

"WE'VE had Australia pencilled in for the last few years, but things never fell into place at the right time — but now it's working, so we're looking forward to coming."

So says the Stranglers' hulkingly enigmatic drummer Jet Black, on the eve of the band's second Australian tour. They have a hectic schedule to stick to — seven dates in ten days, taking in all the mainland capital cities bar Darwin. After the events of their 1979 visit, the band are unsure as to what reaction to expect — from both the public and the media. Since the last tour they've released two major hit singles, a video compilatiion and five more albums, all of which confirmed their aspirations as a band willing to take chances in the attempt to better themselves musically, rather than allow their reputation for outrageous behaviour to precede them.

The Australian media have mellowed somewhat to the Stranglers over the years. The paranoia displayed during the band's first Antipodean venture now seems a trifle overrated. Remember when Molly Meldrum wouldn't have them on *Countdown*, yet lauded their talents when *Golden Brown* became a hit? Or Mike Willesee's condemnation of them as a 'bunch of sexist thugs'? Jet concedes that media coverage of their last tour may have tainted some people's view of them...

"I don't really know what the public can look forward to, but whatever it is they're expecting will turn out to be a surprise (*laughs*)."

Why's that?

"Because I think the way we've been portrayed in the Australian media, from what I know — and I don't know it all — is probably very misleading. It'll be enjoyable from the media's point of view, but I believe they'll be surprised. . . *pleasantly* surprised."

Wait a minute, Jet. What do you think the public's view of you is?

"The public have been submitted — certainly during our tour and shortly afterwards — to media coverage that portrayed us a load of British punk loonies. I'm sure that it left an impression on a lot of people.

"Yes, we are looking forward to Queensland. I hear we're going to be arriving in the middle of a new political storm with some new laws against the unions."

I gave him a quick brief on the current situation, including the fact that journalists put themselves at risk covering pickets and demos, and that several had been arrested already. . .

"That's amazing! It's a constantsource of amazement to us, the situation that exists there. It's absolutely extraordinary. There's got to be a backlash against it sooner or later."

I then told him about Bjelke-Petersen's latest electoral redistribution, effectively putting him in power for a number of years yet.

"Good God!"

You might get another song out of it?

"(laughs) Yes, maybe we will. . . or a jail sentence at least!"

JAIL sentences and encounters with the law in general have played intermittent parts in the Stranglers' career. Guitarist Hugh Cornwell was jailed for several months in 1981 for possession of cocaine, and the next year saw the much-publicised arrest of the whole band when French authorities accused them of inciting a riot at a gig in Nice. Not particularly impressed by the treatment they received, Jet wrote a book called *Much Ado About Nothing*, chronicling events there. An amusing little tome, it showed that Jet wasn't afraid to exercise his creative drives elsewhere. . .

"I made a documentary movie for BBC Television a couple of years ago, about the 'black' phenomenon and its association with power. Wherever you see power and authority, youl'll find black. In courts they always wear black; funerals are full of people in black; people in religion always wear black. I wrote the script — the dialogue — played a part in it, and we did a recreation of the 'men in black' and put the thing together. It was enormous fun."

(The men in black are mysterious characters reputed for such activities as visiting UFO witnesses, to 'persuade' them not to report their sightings to the authorities.)

Hugh assisted Jet with the documentary, discussing ideas and viewing reel after reel of library footage for use in demonstrating how people had used black as a social metaphor through the ages. . .

"We had pictures of Hitler's SS, Sir Oswald Mosley's blackshirts, and Archbishop Makarios of Cyprus — who was a typical 'black' church leader."

. . . They then pieced the various scenes together, after which Jet scripted and narrated the footage. . .

"It went to air a couple of times in Britain, and I believe it's going to air again soon. It was presented as a Stranglers' view of a strange phenomenon, and it showed us doing something different."

Do you find you are involving yourself more and more in outside activities?

"Yes — more and more things become available to one over the years, and it's been 10½ years now for us. . . you become a little better-known and your horizons broaden. You get greater opportunities as time goes on, and that's fun. By the same token, we've been touring Europe for nearly two months now and we've got two weeks in France before we head off toward you. The tour's been great — we haven't done one for two years, so it's almost like a new experience for us."

As fate and history would have it, the current world tour has already seen the Stranglers brush once more with the law. The scene: Italy, a place most bands don't even bother to visit, according to Jet. . .

"We went right down to the heel of Italy to a little town called Bari — a very desolate, remote area — and we thought it was going to be a complete disaster. But we nearly had a riot there! The police saw 3,000 people turn up for the concert, over-reacted and said they were only going to allow 500 into the venue. When you've got 500 people inside and another 2,500 outside — all with tickets — then you've got a recipe for a riot.

"It took a lot of persuading; in fact, we refused to appear until the whole audience was allowed in. If we'd started, it would have been a riot. That sort of thing always seems to happen. . .in the end, they let them in. I don't know where the people came from, but it was packed, and the concert was brilliant."

Would that the organisation was so. . .

"The promoters there are so *untogether*. You arrive at a venue and they haven't even built the stage, or they've built it and the electricity is at the other end of the room — they haven't got a clue what it's all about. That causes all sorts of problems for the crew; they have to spend hours doing what in other countries is just a routine job."

How have audiences reacted on this tour?

"They came along a little surprised at what we've got in store this time — which is very different — but they've gone away liking it!"

The Stranglers are now using a three-piece brass section — trombone, sax and trumpet — foremost to effectively recreate songs from *Aural Sculpture*, but also to rework some older numbers.

"We haven't used them just for the sake of it. We discovered on a couple of numbers that they make an addition that really works, so that'll be a surprise for one thing."

Will you use them in future?

"It's hard to say, but as long as we're going to want to play these numbers with the brass, then we're going to have to think about it."

Anything else new in store?

"We have what is quite a new lighting idea that you don't see with other bands. . . and we've still got some energy left in our old age!"

What's so special about the lightshow?

"I'm not giving away secrets. . . I'm not going to pre-empt our dramatic entrance for the Australian media!"

MARK O'LEARY

(Pic: JF/LFI)

Is the POWER STATION a case of individual load-shedding, or do SuperGroups still conduct electricity? STEVE SUTHERLAND searches for a socket to plug into... JOHN TAYLOR & ROBERT PALMER short him out with some sharp answers.

Does POWER Have A P O I N T?

RP (pic: MP/LFI)

JT (pic: R/SY/LFI)

"SO, what's new?" John Taylor descends the studio stairs and smiles that vacant smile of his — the one that lazily radiates presence. He doesn't wait for an answer, because he doesn't particularly want one — but, seeing as he asked, he's got richer and I've gone madder in the year since we last met.

He looked rough then, and he looks rough now — the lunchtime after the saki'd out night before. But two hours later — after make-up, haircut, hair — wash, blow dry, clothes change, shave, shoeshine and bacon sanger — there he is, raising a Roger Moore eyebrow, pouting for the camera, slaying girls from here to Taiwan. The same old JT. So what's new?

Robert Palmer's altogether more lively — alarmingly so for this godforsaken time of day. He's edgy, efficient and polite, still looks middle-aged, still looks more like a businessman than a crooner. He still lives in Nassau, still sports a flawless tan, still keeps himself elegantly *apart*.

The hairdresser's squirting stuff on his hair and fluffing it, just like they do in all the movies, when a drop drips on Palmer's liver-coloured tie. The singer throws a minor wobbler and stomps off to get it cleaned. Turns out it took him five years to find that tie, and he's only owned it two days.

So what's new?

The Power Station — John Taylor, Andy Taylor, Robert Palmer, Tony Thompson and Bernard Edwards, a rock-dance band for today, a marriage between Duran, chic and Chic, a marriage made in Paris and named after the famous studio in 53rd Street, New York — just got down to it. The original notion was to do T Rex's *Get It On*, but it developed and now there's the hit single, *Some Like It Hot*, an album and loads of unpremeditated interviews to do.

So what's new?

Supergroups. Who the hell needs them?

"In America, we don't have to justify why we did it, but here it doesn't seem enough that we just wanted to make music." JT smiles that lazy smile again, just to let us all know he's not a bit fazed

"All the reasons we did it are so cliched, I cringe when I say them. But we're being challenged all the time: 'Well Robert, don't you think you're trying to jump on the back of Duran's success?' 'Well John, don't you think you're trying to get a bit of credibility?' It was nothing like that. We were just friends, and we wanted to try it out."

Palmer has at least a decade on JT, and hence grasps less of the post-punk machinations that keep the industry turning. Characteristically, he retreats into pure innocence ...

"Both of us get slagged off here for more or less the same reasons. When I last read the papers" (*he says this in such a way that we know he's above such things*), "they said what we were doing wasn't valid for the English market. But once you get some success in yourself — knowing that you're doing something — you don't think in terms of markets and stuff like that, you *have* to make the music; it becomes something you cling onto to keep the priorities straight. Everybody involved has needed that. Can't we get together and play and turn on a tape recorder and make a record?"

Well, yes, but ...

"We were watching the Firm the other night," JT laughs. "We should really like them, I guess. No ... they were alright. It's not as if we've gone and done anything indulgent. There's two cover versions" (*a tight, mellow version of the Isley Brothers'* Harvest To The World *as well as their pneumatic* Get It On), "but they're not exactly faithful reproductions. It's not like the Honeydrippers, or something where we'd just play all our favourite songs. I think we've done something constructive, and I think we've done it well.

"The whole stigma about this being a supergroup comes from what happened before — it became so lame. But when it was first done, say when Cream were formed, there was nothing wrong with that — it just became such a cliche. It's like concept albums — everybody thinks '*Tales* Of Topographic Oceans, how boring.' But there's no reason why someones shouldn't do one now. I'm really bothered about this supergroup thing anyway, because I think the heart was in it; nothing desperate about it."

"If I looked at it on paper, I'd be sceptical too," says Palmer, "But then I'd go round to somebody else's house and the record would be on and I'd go 'Hey! What's THIS?' It's defeating your own prejudices. I feel it has an appeal, despite all this we're on about now. If it had just come out anonymously, it would still stand up for itself. We wouldn't put ourselves in this kind of position otherwise. The record speaks for itself, no bones about it."

SO what's new? Another record for the sake of it? What's it all *about?*

Palmer draws on the mystery of the muse once again...

"I have this joke with my players onstage. Somebody'll be in the middle of a solo, and I'll go up to 'em and say 'Are you playing?', because there's this thing — 'Are you rehearsing?', 'Are you thinking?' If somebody's playing, you're not *there*, there's no *mind* in it at all. Writing's like that. We were all playing, there was no mind in the way, no egos."

And no concept?

Palmer grins: "All of us were at the mercy of what came out of the speakers."

"If anything, it sounds like the record that everybody was saying they were trying to make three years ago," JT adds; "it's certainly the one I thought of way, way back, before I'd even met Simon and Andy. That's what I wanted to do — a much more pure crossover of rock and disco."

JT's always been handy with the line about crossing the Sex Pistols with Chic...

"I've always nurtured the idea it could still work. We've really taken it back to basics a real band sound, we're just in the studio playing."

"I don't think it's suffused with any particular set of cliches," says Palmer. "It's diverse. I listen to this record and I'm stumped, I don't know what it is."

"A funky Led Zeppelin's the closest thing I can think of," says JT... and he smiles that smile again.

So what's the *point*?

There's a cute conflict here between the professional and personal, between JT saying "nobody *needed* to do it, nobody's signed a contract yet", and Palmer saying "we didn't know how much we needed to do it until we were *doing* it".

If it wasn't such a damn *hard* record, if it wasn't so sharp and fine, I'd be tempted to suggest the Power Station is a convenient way of getting us to pay for their therapy...

"There were certain things I couldn't do with Duran Duran," JT admits, "but it was never a challenge to the band, there was never any competition. I've been with them for six years now, and I've never played with anybody else — it was just nice to try an alternative way of doing things."

"Everybody got stretched," says Palmer. "Much as I've worked with other people" (*including the mighty Little Feat*), "I've never before worked in a situation where I've had so much help. This is a communal effort, everybody is vitally interested in it. It's everybody's gig. They stress the thing created was just what everybody needed. John was forced to play in front of his hero — the guy who made him pick up the bass in the first place."

Bernard Edwards, the Chic bassist, was apparently coaxed into cracking the whip as producer and organiser when Nile Rodgers mysteriously opted out during the backing track stage. Why?

"Only Nile knows."

"Yeah, *Bernard*. There were a couple of nights when I was leaving in tears," says JT. "Y'know, it was really important. We put down the first backing tracks in London about the time of *The Wild Boys; The Reflex* was number one in America and about six other places, and I felt like saying 'I don't need this, I'm getting my ass kicked here'. It was just like going back to school.

"Bernard wasn't giving me grief, but he was making me *work* and I was having to completely reassess my role. All the extra-curricular stuff had become so important; getting in and playing was becoming a little bit secondary, and this was like putting it all back in proportion — which was a great thing for me, because at that point, my ego could have gone sky-high and this really gave me a kick back down to earth."

SOUNDS idyllic doesn't it, all these pop stars working off their inferiority complexes together?

"Everybody was given the chance to breathe," as JT puts it. "Andy was able to let off steam and play, I was able to take control of artwork and stuff because everybody let me and I've always wanted to; Tony needed, for once, to be asked his opinion because he's always been used to Bernard or Nile saying 'do this', and Robert's been producing and mixing his own stuff for the last three years and he's never been able to walk away from a situation and *trust* somebody. Bernard hasn't done anything for ages — he just sat back while Nile did his thing, and now he's proved he can do it as easy as falling off a bike."

Edwards has also produced the new Duran single, the theme to *A View To Kill* — the next James Bond film. He and Palmer have also done another album with Tony Thompson. Whatever next?

"Well, I'm planning my next nervous breakdown around July." That smile again.

So what's *new* anyway? A desperate urge to foster novelty, each new generation needing to feel they're in possession of their very own soundtrack, each corporation needing to sell them one. It's that easy. New faces playing the same old stuff, recycled. The Power Station in reverse, in fact.

"I don't think it's a predictable record," says John. "I don't think it's what's expected of us."

It's certainly harder than anything anybody involved has attempted before — Andy even gets to rock out like Eddie Van Halen! The way they're presenting it is different, too. They've performed only once, requesting a spot on *Saturday Night Live* — performing their hybrid funk in the world's funk capital, a challenge that JT sees as tantamount to "taking coals to Newcastle.

"We went out of our way to prove it in the one city that should have been a bit sceptical about it."

According to Palmer, the show was a "party", but it obviously disconcerted many fans used to Duran's increasingly paranoid, homogenised image.

"We don't really look like a *group*," JT laughs; "we look like a TV sitcom — Robert in a morning suit, me and Andy the wayward sons, and Tony the oriental. We never tried to create a *group*, we're not a *group*, we're not selling an *image*. We have to maintain our individuality."

The cohesion, it seems, is largely on vinyl, although JT and Palmer "party" a lot together and have apparently been doing so since long before Palmer's band supported Duran in the UK. Palmer says he doesn't even particularly *like* Duran's music, but admires their 'get-up-and-go' — especially JT's "guts" in getting this together and getting it together *good*. And it's true that the Power Station's muscle shouldn't be underestimated — considering, as JT so poignantly puts it: "I could release a record of farts and it would sell."

So what's new?

"Well, it's really funny. We've been getting good reviews. I'm getting a bit worried — the other boys'll be getting jealous. It's embarrassing."

Talents attuned or reputations self-perpetuating, the Power Station's undeniably another symptom of what Paul Weller blathers on about — the new pop aristocracy. Do they clog up the charts, mafia-fashion, this backslapping cartel of mediamen, or are they really searching for new expression?

And... so what's regeneration anyway? The Power Station exist. Make of that what you will.

Is there Life after Lionel for THE COMMODORES? Having breathed new life and love into the memories of Marvin Gaye and Jackie Wilson, their own regeneration would seem assured. ALAN JACKSON feels it's simply a matter of Horses for Courses, with his money on the stayers.

"WHATCHA DOIN' NOW?"

Pick the ghost of Lionel!

IT'S FUNNY how everyone's so surprised at the Commodores making it big again with *Nightshift* — funny, that is, unless you're a Commodore.

These guys have got pretty sick of us all wondering if they could still cut it now that Lionel Richie's long gone, and a Top 20 hit on both sides of the Atlantic tastes all the sweeter for that.

Nightshift the single is one thing; *Nightshift* the album another. But the good news is that the Commodores are right back on top form, having put last year's shaky and disappointing *Commodores XIII* behind them to come up with an unusually strong and consistent set.

At first, the prospects of talking about what's gone before and what's yet to come look none too promising. We're grabbing a break between the sound check and the pre-gig meal at the Hammersmith Odeon, and the dressing room is almost as crowded as the street outside. Could these seemingly friendly faces turn into a lynch mob when I raise the spectre of Mr Richie?

But no. Despite the fact that I'm on one side of the table and the Commodores are on the other, all is sweetness and light. In fact, they seem to be having so much fun it gets difficult to decipher the answers from the hoots of laughter. What about this single then? Isn't it pretty hard to write a tribute record that doesn't make the listener want to throw up?

"Sure is. All the others make *me* want to puke," says Clyde Orange, the composer of *Nightshift* — cheerfully.

"They've all been quite horrible except mine. But no, I commend anyone who has made a tribute to Marvin Gaye, but I think we've been bolder than the others, actually mentioning names. The Commodores have always been bold with their music starting right back with *Machine Gun*: we made a bold statement right then — we're using synthesisers, and nobody else is. In *Nightshift*, we're not beating about the bush. We're calling Marvin's name — *and* Jackie Wilson's."

THEY say that the new album is a deliberate attempt to go back to basics. All around them they see black artists going for a whiter-than-white sound, so they've reasonably decided to go the opposite way.

"We wanted to get back to our roots," says Clyde. "Back to where the Commodores first started, to give people the chance to hear what we are about all over again. It seems we have picked up a lot of young kids with this song, and that's exactly what our intention was. We want to go right back to the black music and pick up new followers to go with the ones that are already there."

Why was that decision made with this album and not the last one, then? Surely it was with the release of the first post-Richie set they should have gone all out to win...

"This time there was less pressure on us," says the band's keyboard star, Milan Williams. "No one really knows the pressure we were really under when we recorded *XIII*. Everything was happening. We had new management, a new record deal, almost a new record label. We'd just lost our manager, Lionel Richie had left the group and we were just fighting, trying to find our way.

"We knew that there had to be a release from us, and it was a bit like a chess game where you may have to sacrifice a knight or a bishop when you make your move, just to get into a position to win the game. I honestly feel that if we had put this album out then, it would have still come under as much pressure. Whatever song we put out then, they were going to compare it to what went before. Whoever sang on it too. It could have been a female singer and they would have said, 'Hey, that's not Richie. We ain't gonna play it'. We had to get past that. It wasn't the public, they just wanted to see what we were going to do. We had to get past the *industry*."

Warming to the theme, fellow keyboard player Wak King takes over...

"Man, you wouldn't *believe* how much the industry had been psyched out that we couldn't do it without Richie. It was just really unfair, but the only thing you can do is back up into a corner, roll up your sleeves and come out fighting. That's all there is for it. We never doubted that we could do it, but we knew we had to get past that point."

Yeah, people in the industry just *did not want to accept us* then," adds Clyde. "They didn't want to hear, which was a real shame because we'd put in maybe 13, 14 years going round the country. You shake hands with these same people, you party with them, do everything you can to satisfy them and then when you need that helping hand, they turn their backs. Everybody sure loves a winner."

The question of winners once again brings to mind Lionel Richie — he hasn't done too bad since leaving the Commodores. Does the band still perform the songs, particularly the ballads, that became so closely associated with him?

"Sure, we do all our hits," says Milan firmly. "Yes he sang some of them, but the Commodores *made* them."

IT'S AT that point that things become a little riotous, giving the impression that there are possibly as many as *three* versions of the official Commodores line on Richie — there's the official one, the *official* unofficial one, and then what they *really think*.

Frantic coughing and *cut-that-out* signs from the management across the room plus the assorted snorts, wheezes and explosions of mirth of the guys themselves make sorting this multi-layered subject into clear categories somewhat difficult...

It seems you're anxious to put him in his place when it comes to discussing the Commodores' history, I say to Clyde?

"Yeah, we put him in his place," he replies. "You should have seen us when he was *here*..."

So do you still like the man, I persist?

"Yeah, we still like him," says Milan. "I haven't seen him, but I still like him — I really do." Clyde and Wak dissolve into laughter.

"No, sometimes I think he's... well, not afraid, but just ashamed to come around us," he continues. "He has not willingly come to see us. We went to see him, but we still haven't *seen* him. We're still friends and stuff. I see his wife all the time in the shopping centre, his wife knows my ex-wife, all that. But I made a special trip down to see him in Dallas, and since then I haven't seen him. I had to go three thousand miles."

"Everybody who talks to us since then wants to know if we're fighting all the time," says Clyde, "but it wasn't like that. It was about a business move. He made his move, he left and there we were. But we're coming round now. Every dog has his day... hey, wait a minute!"

At that point he has to defend himself from the insults of Milan and Wak, who tries to take the reins. "He was *busy*," he begins. "Busy?" comes a management voice from behind. "Busy — he *screwed* you."

Wak tries again, saying it was the number of outside responsibilities that Richie had taken on which made the split inevitable...

"We could not stop our careers, our livelihoods, because he was committed to something else across town," he says, "We said, 'You got into it, so you get out of it. You either dig yourself out or dig down in it, but we've got to go on the way we're going.' We had to part peacefully and respectfully. That's the way it went down."

It's at that point that the newest Commodore, J.D. Nicholas, is introduced. The London-born former Heatwave vocalist stayed in the States when that band — always more appreciated there than at home — split three years ago. He was doing session work with Ray Parker Jnr when the call from the Commodores came, and his successful audition ended a three year off-and-on search for what the band say was a 'nice guy who could sing too'.

Now that the personnel is steady and the Commodores are back in the charts, we can expect to hear as much of them as we did during those golden days with Lionel Richie, when they notched up most of their 40 million record sales worldwide.

"We're not concerned with working with other people," says Wak, suddenly serious. "If I go out and do something with somebody else, a little bit of the Commodores goes with me. Same if any of the other guys were to do the same.

"Our commitment is to us now, and that's the way it *should* be."

SEEN & HEARD

■ RECORDS ■ GIGS ■ MOV KS

KILLING JOKE

(Dee Why Hotel, Sydney)

I dunno — the things you see when you haven't got your shotgun... Things like Russ Hinze, Susan Peacock Sangster, Killing Joke. And not forgetting the Dee Why crowd that Giggling Jaz Coleman and his Jolly Troops attract. Fair dinkum, there were blokes there with necks like the complete Encyclopaedia Brittanica. I kid you not. These blokes, and I use the term loosely, were mean as catshit, slamming to the point of head injuries. You know the type: I witnessed one take two pulls on his tinny before he realised he hadn't opened it yet. Mind boggling, really.

And Jaz — well, what can you say? The man is an Entertainer right down to his bootstraps. There wasn't a face he didn't pull, nor a rock'n'roll gesture he didn't trot out. They gave us a big hint during the changeover when Gary Glitter's *Come On* cropped up on the taped selection of crowd pacifiers. Killing Joke are strictly glam, at least as cartoon-like as your average MTV metal heads. The songs are all built on repetitive football clap rhythms and monotonous power chording which holds and holds and then shifts key with sometimes dazzling effect. Music to clench fists to.

I must admit to being passingly fascinated by the guitarist, an Aryan-looking chap with one of those stunning triangular faces — all cheekbone and wicked mouth. He also features a highly idiosyncratic style of movement — very liquid, very sensual and yet somehow extremely brutal. Like watching butchery as art.

The others, three of them, are pretty anonymous muso types. It would, after all, be difficult to compete. Even Komandant Guitar has to caricature himself just to get a look-in beside our Jaz. He is the frontman par excellence, once you get over the shock of his haircut vibrating away like a Loxene ad on a jackhammer. He's *soooo* masculine. And of course it doesn't actually pay to listen too closely to what he actually *says*. But then rock'n'roll never had much to do with coherence, did it?

Discounting the ludicrous spectacle of it all, KJ are a noise machine to be reckoned with. Though the best songs feature almost identical trump cards, they fair make you wobble your head regardless. It's easy to see what the yobs are getting off on — a seamless, pulsing aggro energy that shudders down your spine. Not a great deal of subtlety, but heaps of clout.

If only Jaz would rest on these ample laurels. But no, every chance he gets he's mouthing about tribal male energy and the cleansing power of violence and so on: the ravings of a feeble minded megalomaniac, and with some very unpleasant implications. It's my guess, however, that the Big Necks couldn't give a toss about said politics or morality or anything else with more than two syllables, and who am I to knock 'em for that? I'm smaller than most of 'em.

Which reminds me — rumour has it that when our Jaz grows up, he wants to be a boy. Only joshing, mate.

WANDA JAMROZIK

Der Kommandant (Pic: Tom Takacs/Camerartery)

PAUL KELLY
Post
(White Label)

The resurrection of song and singerman Paul Kelly's career is no small cause for celebration, now since the release of what is in fact his debut solo album, *Post*.

A big part of Paul's problem in the past was that he was encumbered with hack bands. (This may have been his own doing as much as anyone's, but I wonder how much pressure was brought to bear on the vulnerable Kelly by his management/record company.) Certainly, there was never any doubt as to Kelly's potential as a songwriter in the classic mould. (Although again I wonder if he wasn't at times pushed in more 'commercial' directions not entirely of his own.)

Overlooking the High Rise Bombers, a Carlton cult of sprawling proportions in which Kelly was only another cog anyway, the first lineup of his own band, the Dots — which, as I recall, featured the dual guitar-axis of Carlton stalwarts Chris'es Worrell and Dyson — was deftly capable of rendering Kelly's material with sensitivity, but sadly lacked real imagination and fire. The last lineup of Dots I saw, at the Tivoli in Sydney about 18 months ago, was an almost ham-fisted, meat'n'potatoes sixties-style band that did no justice whatsoever to some fine songs. So by now Paul Kelly has completely stripped-down to face the world alone with his acoustic guitar, and whether or not it was prompted by Chris Bailey's doing the same, it's the smartest move Kelly's ever made — next to fleeing Melbourne for a more relaxed, more open Sydney.

Post is the result of these upheavals, and finally serves to vindicate the reborn Paul Kelly's importance. Begun on a Portastudio at home, the album was completed at Clive Shakespeare's 16-track studio. Kelly and his own guitar appear predominantly unaccompanied, although they are occasionally augmented by additional instrumentation.

No doubt, these are songs in the raw. The album drips of (early) Dylan, but then rock could well do with the return of such definitive values — so who's complaining? Kelly can turn a simple phrase to emotive and evocative ends — happily this wordsmith doesn't rely on wordiness, his imagery is homely to the point of shamelessness — and the songs offer a narrative flow which begs an involvement. Not compelling as such maybe, but these songs are beguiling in their allure. Only their sentimentalism is overt, and fortunately that too stops just short of excess and sometime even contradicts itself.

The music occupies a niche somewhere between pop, folk, country and blues, and the album's casual, mellow feel barely disguises its underlying passion. Kelly's vocalese is a (perhaps) somewhat predictable nascent drawl, after the fashion of mentors Dylan and Lou Reed, but his unaffected sincerity justifies it. It's substantiated further by Kelly's gift for understated melody — which is ultimately insidiously catchy. The arrangements are naturally uncluttered, minimal instrumentation allowing maximum space for some delightful performances, especially in the sax of Chris Coyne and slide guitar by (now-Triffid) Graham Lee.

True to genre, *Post* documents Paul Kelly's changing heart and mind; it is, in fact, a cohesively constructed song-cycle. *Adelaide* is a lilting paean to Kelly's hometown, while *St Kilda To King's Cross* describes that very journey with a poignance reserved at both ends. *Incident On South Dowling St* and *Standing On The Street Of Early Sorrow* lament past tribulations (and *White Train* a sad and ugly involvement with drugs), yet *You Can Put Your Shoes Under My Bed, Satisfy Your Woman* and *Look So Fine, Feel So Low* confront the present with a positive new initiative. Kelly's vulnerability remains characteristic, however, and it informs *Post* throughout — but it's surely courageous to conclude the album with the confessional *Little Decisions: 'Little decisions, are the kind I can make/Big resolutions, are so easy to break/I don't wanna hear about your big decisions.'*

Post is an excellent album that's necessarily spare, but what is perhaps most encouraging about it is the scope it leaves for expansion; and in his current, new band the Coloured Girls, Paul Kelly has the means to refine and realise his greater potential. Watch this man, but don't rush him.

CLINTON WALKER

PHIL COLLINS
No Jacket Required
(WEA)

Phil Collins is rightly famous for his distinctive drum sound, achieved by chopping off the beat a fraction of a second after it has started to implode. Who could forget Frida's vain attempts to compete with Collins' drums on *There's Something Going On*?, or the enormous barrage of *In The Air Tonight*?

The sound is less obvious on this LP but his chosen instrument still features highly... naturally enough. Not surprisingly, he writes his uptempo material from a rhythmic base. On the trail of the definitive dance track, the lad listened to a lot of his favourite black records and came up with *Sussudio*. He acknowledges that its keyboard coda is pretty much the same as Prince's *1999*, but disclaims any other similarity. Oh yeah?

Being a workaholic, Collins doesn't leave himself much time to allow songs to gestate. Although solo albums are a natural priority, they seem to be squeezed in between other projects. He stockpiles ideas on paper and cassette until making the decision to record, then books a studio — setting himself a deadline by which he must come up with the songs. Thus much of the material on this album is the work of a talented craftsman, rather than an inspired artist. Some would say it's the work of a cunning plagiarist, but Collins usually displays a remarkable talent for blurring his influences.

One More Night is set to eclipse the success of *Sussudio*. Collins has a definite strong suite in balladry, managing to evoke feelings that most us share at one time or another: it's the Everyman Approach, though he says that he prefers to write from experience — in which case, he deserves our sympathy. The man has a tragic love life, but then so do a lot of us. Still, there must be some consolation in the financial rewards of airing his woes.

Although tracks like *Who Said I Would?* and *Doesn't Anyone Stay Together Anymore?* feature memorable riffs and some fine musicianship, they sound like they were knocked up in his sleep. The choruses, like that of *One More Night*, suffer from constant repetition of the one-line title.

There are some great moments on this album, but there's also the air of a talent sold short. Collins says he has no intention of releasing another album till 1987. It'd be a shame if he doesn't really start preparing for it till a month or two before recording, because the best of his work gives every indication that he is capable of creating a classic.

It might be worth knocking back the odd production job to concentrate on doing so...

RAY FARLEY

BANGLERS
All Over The Place
(Liberation)

There are those, I suppose, who remain suspicious of the Bangles... those who figure four Californian girls under the aegis of Miles Copeland must surely be the new Runaways, all eye-liner and legs a-go-go.

The Banglers are actually one hell of a guitar clam-bake, so stash the cynicism. I know, there's been an awful lot of crap written and talked just lately about the new American this and that — most of which has just been a flabby excuse to revel in more Verlaine guitar solos, rocking live but utterly impotent on record.

All Over The Place, a neat misnomer, effectively puts that to rights. A buoyant beat celebration, bright and tight, whether you chose to catalogue all the Beatles' harmonies *(Restless)*, Kinks' crash chords *(Tell Me)*, Monkees' choruses (*All About You*) and McGuinn interstellar excursions (all over the place!), or whether you're just keen to get your head turned around something jubilant, the Bangles are for you.

We all know history repeats itself, we all know fashions rehash and recycle and we all know how painfully embarrassing that can be, but *All Over The Place* bristles with such personality that it supercedes pastiche. The Bangles' version of Kimberley Rew's *Going Down To Liverpool* is great pop, *classic* pop in any era. Simply gorgeous — it's as good as anything you'll ever hear — the bitter-sweet harmonies, drummer Debbi Peterson's dreamy-yet-dejected lead vocals pretty and pointed around a resonant lyric: *'Hey, where you going with that UB40 in your hand?/I'm going down to Liverpool to do nothing all the days of my life.'*

Elsewhere (everywhere), there's Susanna "dangerous eyes" Hoff's equally dangerous cowgirl vocals astride the galloping *Hero Takes A Fall*, Vicki Peterson's wayward lead guitar wandering tipsily all over *James* and the dizzy paean to Crazy Horse, *Dover Beach*.

It won't change the world, but it may change your life. Hey, summer's here already!

STEVE SUTHERLAND

JOHN MARTYN
Sapphire
(Island)

It would be fair to say that John Martyn has never been guilty of making a *bad* record. Undemanding, complacent or even a trifle boring perhaps, but never *bad*.

He's too much of a genius. His guitar playing at best is mesmerising; at worst, it's just mildly hypnotising. His lyrics, when not aimed bitterly in the direction of former wife Beverly, are unapologetically *English*. They have the folk sensibility of a Richard Thompson, who has recently resurrected his own ailing career — John Martyn has yet to impress with a 'comeback' album, and *Sapphire* won't do it for him.

This is his *sixteenth* LP — staggering, isn't it? His voice is getting huskier, more contorted, twisted and overblown; but his lyrics still retain that *edge*, that slightly bitter, hard-done-by tone that is a Martyn trademark. But somehow they've chased him into middle age, becoming marginally softer, a mite more reflective, even *resigned*.

And then there's the famous John Martyn guitarwork... Or *is* there? Excuse me please, um, *where* exactly is it? Hidden beneath an avalanche of insipid keyboards, squeezing the humanity, all the real pathos out of the record. (Eight people score credits for synths; three cop guitar credits: sacrilege of the highest order!)

The album opens with the title track, the beautiful and poignant *Sapphire*. This song proves right away that John Martyn still *suffers*. It's twisted and bitter, overwrought and confused, anguished and blue. There's further evidence of such deep sensitivity on the sombre and introverted *Fisherman's Dream* and the melodramatic *Coming In On Time*. Elsewhere, Martyn explores white reggae (with synths?!) on *Watching Her Eyes*, and tries his hand — and voice! — at being black on *You Know*. He succeeds... marginally.

Most albums contain at least one truly woeful track. Martyn makes an early claim with his glib cover of *Over The Rainbow*, which for some reason he has also released as the first single. For someone who has been heard to bemoan his lack of commercial success, he sure makes some strange career decisions.

Despite its flaws, *Sapphire* has an impeccable pedigree — recorded at Chris Blackwell's Compass Point Studio in Nassau, yer basic roster of Island mega-heavies all make an appearance. From Barry Reynolds on bass to James Hooker and Jim Prine on keyboards, Steven Stanley on Linn drum to Uzziah "Sticky" Thompson on percussion, this album reeks musical class.

That's why *Sapphire* isn't a *bad* record. At times undemanding, complacent or even a wee bit boring perhaps — but no, not *bad*.

VIRGINIA MONCRIEFF

QUEEN
(Entertainment Centre, Sydney)

(Pic: Tom Takacs/Camerartery)

Now and then I wax enthusiastic, blathering crazily about a particular experience. To say that Queen played well, put on a great show, had the times of their lives and avowedly blew away the audience would be a gross understatement (please believe me, I'm on my sixth draft). I loved it.

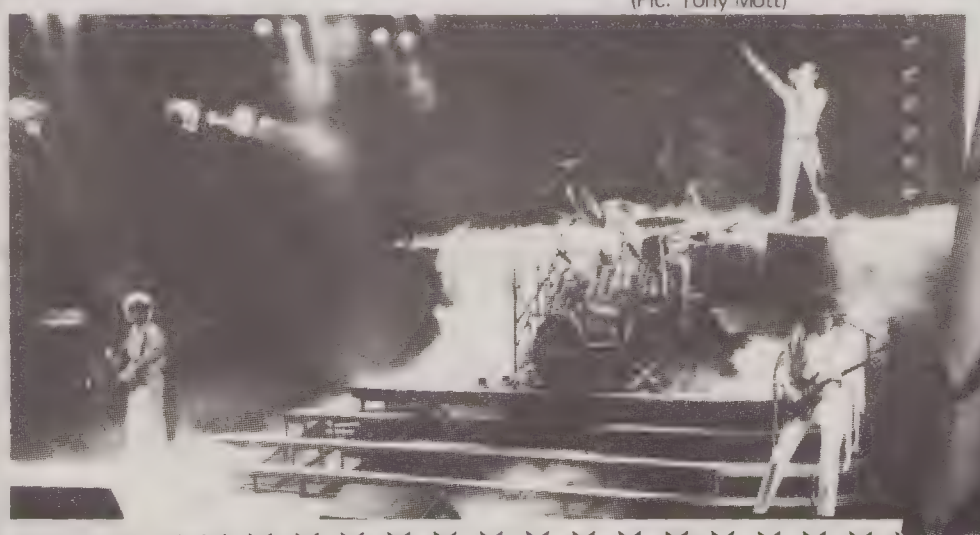
They'd not played in Sydney since the black night six years ago when they were booed offstage at the Capitol. This time they were back at the peak of their career with a set that seemed like an endless font of hits.

At the end of the first twosong medley, the audience response was as ecstatic a show of support as many a band would be happy with at the *end of a show!* Within an elaborately monstrous stage set (a cross between *Metropolis* and *Close Encounters...*), the band — spearheaded by a frenetic Freddie Mercury — put on one of the most powerful displays of sheer firepower I've ever experienced. Freddie himself was true to his legend, slightly vulgar at all times (with a strong leaning toward exhibitionism), vocally pure and physically Nijinksy-like. My attention continually wandered, however, to the imposing figure of Brian May, whose exemplary guitar playing spanned the gamut from bone-crunching riffs to delicate nylon string figures.

***Bohemian Rhapsody*, naturally, was the centrepiece of the show. Quite a rendition, with the stage literally exploding into action as the band thundered into that famous sonic passage. Towards the end of the show, the anthems were unleashed wholesale with their last encore being a medley of *We Will Rock You* and *We Are The Champions*. The crowd were wild by this stage, and the band left the stage to the strains of .. *God Save The Queen*! It seemed he'd been on side all night, with none of the technical hitches that plagued the first Melbourne show in evidence at any stage. The jinx of '78 had been truly avenged...**

JEREMY BENDER

(Pic: Tony Mott)



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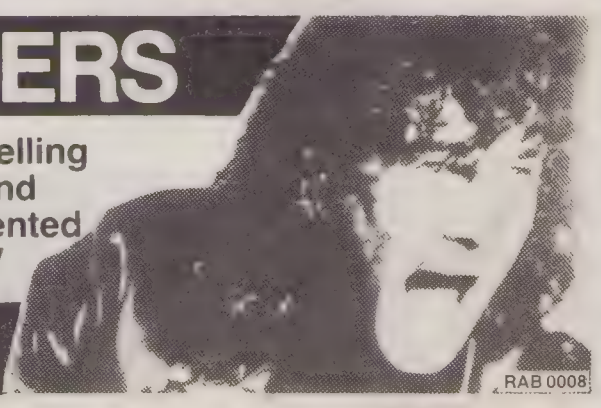


RAB 0008

SEEN & HEARD

■ RECORDS ■ GIGS ■ MOVIES ■ BOOKS

THE SAINTS
(Tivoli, Sydney)

Ah, the Saints' new lineup — anticipation was in the air. Chris Bailey welcomed the audience to the "discotheque at the end of the universe" — the Tivoli. The new personnel were evidently at ease with each other, and Bailey at ease with himself. Gone was the erstwhile tension of the Laughing Clowns, as Jeff Wegener and Louise Elliot mimed Bailey's lyrics whilst playing off each other with supremely relaxed confidence.

There are certainly more consistent drummers in Australia than Wegener, but none as recklessly brilliant. This man holds a spark within him that was tonight sustained throughout the whole performance. Though his association with the Laughing Clowns involved a sense of experimentation at odds with the formal jazz style he had already mastered, his jazz past compliments a strong future as a rock drummer with a spirit of adventure. Elliot contributed a melodic flute to one song, and her sax no longer recalls the formless wail of the Clowns. It has a punch that adds strength to the rhythm section, already toughened with the addition of guitarist Richard Burgman.

They concluded the set with *Ghostships* ("Ah, the power of television," sighed Bailey), *In The Mirror*, and a rousing, raucous *Know Your Product*. Bailey returned for an encore armed only with acoustic guitar, and effectively mesmerised an already captive audience. The band joined him in the next encore, which featured the criminally neglected *Angels* and a throwaway *Dizzy Miss Lizzy*. Here Richard Burgman spontaneously clapped a short flourish by Wegener while Bailey asked the drummer: "How low can you go?"

This band deserves the heights of attention. Potentially the best live act in Australia, its combination of ability, consistency and strength of material make it worthy of any and all praise. Muster your friends, save your money and get to see 'em — they'll reward your patronge. Mesmeric tonight, the world tomorrow!

DAMIEN McLEAY

(Pic: Tom Takacs/Camerartery)

NIK KERSHAW
The Riddle
(WEA)

Kershaw's second, this album's obvious centrepiece is its title track, a song that poses no questions itself but by nature of obscure lyrics causes the curious listener to ask 'what *is* it about?' Whether anyone can figure out an answer is another matter.

On the inner sleeve credits, one Marcel Duchamp is thanked for the song — but who is he? A French philosopher whose thoughts are represented in the lyrics and whose name will have the intellectuals gasp 'oh *yes*, of course!'?

Most songs on offer here deal with self-delusion, from the power-monger of *Know How* boasting about being a *'cut above the rest'* to the loser in *You Might* who dreamt of being so many things but never got past the dreams. Perhaps it's a bit close to the bone for most of us.

The protagonist in Kershaw's first hit, *Wouldn't It Be Good?* lamented how much better off other people seem to be. The antithesis of such thinking is represented here in *Wild Horses*, which deals with two men living less than satisfactory lives who refuse to even consider the suggestion that there may be a better way. Then the current single, *Wide Boy*, is a put-down of an 'ordinary guy' who achieves overnight success but is unlikely to go much further.

If Kershaw can resolve his lyrical inconsistencies and get comfortable with his own self-image, perhaps he'll come closer to solving the riddle on his next outing. For now, look forward to the live show — if his band can deliver the same panache exhibited on *this* album in concert, it'll be worth all the effort of coming to grips with his subject matter.

RAY FARLEY

TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS
Southern Accents
(WEA)

Whatever Tom Petty means to you — McGuinn pastiches, sun-bleached blondes and cheekbones, car cassettes and highway heaven or absolute America AOR — *Southern Accents* will confound as much as confirm your anticipations.

Whether by fortuitous fluke or incredible inspiration, Petty has suddenly confronted his reputation, taken stock, taken it apart and gone for something extraordinarily *new*.

Southern Accents has everything anyone could have expected from it — it's like an archive of Americana, using the past, polishing it into a gleaming present and parading itself as something vitally contemporary.

Rebels and the title track are burdened with Robbie Robertson's sense of history, yesterday's events informing today's habits. *The Best Of Everything* aches with Springsteen's humanity, a melodramatic ballad over bare piano that, through sheer emotional detail, avoids sentimentality.

All this is basically what we've come to consider Petty's forte — that blistering croak bordering on caricature investing cliche with a thrilling intensity. But *Southern Accents* takes the ingredients and turns them around, thanks largely to Eurythmic Dave Stewart whose co-compositions — *It Ain't Nothin' To Me, Don't Come Around Here No More* and *Make It Better (Forget About Me)* — are a fresh, exuberantly potent hybrid of new technology and old instincts.

At times, the experimentation is superfluous — the spiralling trumpet on *Rebel* is never fully integrated into the texture, an appendage rather than a component. But at his best, Petty's so sleek and minimal it's absurd no-one's been here before. *Mary's New Car*, for instance, cruises along on a breeze of a riff, Petty unashamedly pursuing the old chassis screwing equation, effortlessly and effectively There's so *little* here, it sounds so natural, it's intoxicating — a design streamlined as near to perfect performance as possible.

Against all the odds, *Southern Accents* is the sound of the modern world, aware and alive. Use it.

STEVE SUTHERLAND

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Regular Rockabilly
(Regular)

It's highly debatable whether or not a collection of modern rockabilly should attempt to redefine the form. This well-packaged mini-album, featuring five exponents of the genre, indicates a predominant urge to emulate heroes rather than initiate any new legends.

The **Straight Eights** and the **Treble Clefs** tread the safest path with a stylised American sound and look, although to the Clefs' credit they've at least got some songwriting credentials. The **New Dancehall Racketeers**, while still copyist, are mildly appealing on *We're Going To Teach You To Rock*, but lose the spotlight with their funereal version of *In The Mood*.

The title of the **Jaguars'** *They Call Me The Rockin' Lady* aptly describes a standout of this record, the voice-like-honey-with-turps of Toni Allaysis. During *Baby Don't Ever Leave Me Again*, you wonder why he left her in the first place. Here's a fine singer, who at eighteen has a promising future.

The **Milky Bar Kids** display more than a glimmer of hope. With their authentic image and original approach, they dare to interpret the form. *If You Remember Me*, penned by bass player Paul Burton, is by far the hippest matter on this patchy platter — it's a corker that pops all over the place. As for their rendition of Elvis's *Flaming Star*, it's a case of Why Bother?

These two songs from the Kids also accompany the mini-album as a seven-inch single. With *Flaming Star* on the A-side, a fine song has taken a back seat to a far less distinctive effort. *If You Remember Me* is the one indication on this set of wherever it is that rockabilly can actually go. And that ain't the hairdresser's or the 50s chic boutique...

JEREMY BENDER

SEX & DRUGS & ROCK'N'ROLL

(Gallo Books, thru Music Sales Ltd)

Some things never change, and one of them is the way people (especially young and famous people) have fun. If the title of this extraordinary photo collection seems plagiaristic, consider Ian Dury's oft-quoted slogan as a paraphrasal of our own Daddy Cool's *Dope, Sex, Rock'n'Roll: Teenage Heaven*. And what is that, in essence, but a mere updating of the age-old 'Wine, Women and Song'? We are dealing with eternal themes here, if not verities, and no amount of Eighties earnestness is going to wipe them away.

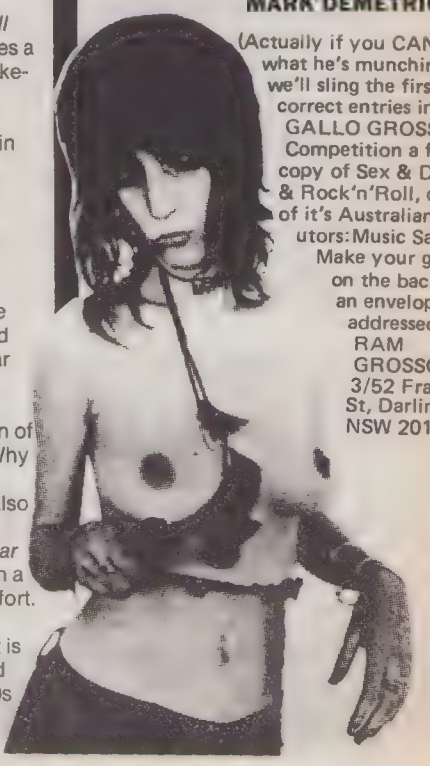
In view of the exceptional tackiness and general grossness of many of these celebrity snaps, it is perhaps unsurprising that no-one has admitted 'authorship' — though the ubiquitous Miles penned an introductory paragraph. The aim of the book is simply to "amuse and entertain", he explains, and it does both admirably. With chapter-headings like *'The Hose Pipe Syndrome'*, *'Great Drug Busts Of Our Time'* and *'Rock'n'Roll Is Being Photographed With Naked Women'*, it caters to the voyeur in us all. As a compendium of excess and exhibitionism, it makes a neat visual companion to Gary Herman's *Rock'n' Roll Babylon*.

From Deborah Harry chundering none too demurely in the ladies' room to a topless Patti Smith wielding a hammer in Mapplethorpe's *'Robert Having His Nipple Pierced'*, it's all here and much of it is grotesque. A few of the pictures you've seen before — Bowie and Lou Reed smooching under the watchful eye of Jagger, the Sex Pistols cavorting on tour. For the most part, however, this is fresh dirt — and not for the faint-hearted: the appalling Ozzy Osbourne groping a gargantuan woman springs most readily to mind. Bucks Fizz bums, Dictators' digits in compromising positions, oral sex at a Who opening night party — you get the general idea. Conspicuous consumption in the more usual sense of the phrase is represented by Ted Nugent's tank and the Blue Oyster Cult's army personnel carrier, while Jim Morrison, Charlie Watts and others are shown at their most chemically stupefied.

If the intentionally tasteless is often funny, the unintentional variety can be merely pathetic... and the middle-aged Marianne Faithfull and Ronnie Spector pics are revealing in more ways than one. Amanda Lear's are, on the other hand, potentially educational for those interested in laying to rest the 'is she/isn't she?' controversy.

And you'll never guess what Tom Robinson was caught eating!

MARK DEMETRIUS



(Actually if you CAN guess what he's munching on, we'll sling the first ten correct entries in our GALLO GROSSOUT Competition a free copy of Sex & Drugs & Rock'n'Roll, courtesy of it's Australian distributors: Music Sales Ltd. Make your guess on the back of an envelope addressed to RAM GROSSOUT, 3/52 Francis St, Darlinghurst NSW 2010.)

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FACT 56 "A FACTORY VIDEO"
SECTION 25 – New Horizon/NEW ORDER Ceremony/A CERTAIN RATIO – Forced Laugh/OMITD Electricity/CABARET VOLTAIRE – No Escape/DURUTTI COLUMN – The Missing Boy/KEVIN HEWICK - Ophelia's Drinking Song/THE NAMES – Nightshirt/CRISPY AMBULANCE – The Presence/NEW ORDER – In A Lonely Place/STOCKHOLM MONSTERS Soft Babies.

FACT 71 "A FACTORY OUTING"
NEW ORDER – Your Silent Face/JAMES – Stutter/STOCKHOLM MONSTERS - Life's Two Faces/52nd STREET – The Rapp/A CERTAIN RATIO – Back To The Start & Show Case/SWAMP CHILDREN – You've Got Me Beat/DURUTTI COLUMN – The Beggar/THE WAKE – Uniform/SECTION 25 – Warhead/QUANDO QUANGO - Go Exciting.

FACT 77 "TARAS SHEVCHENKO" – NEW ORDER
ICB/Dreams Never End/Everything's Gone Green/Truth/Senses/Procession/Ceremony/Little Dead Temptation.

FACT 89 "DOWIE"
"...a comedian, a performer, a disgrace" John Dowie at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.
"...stand up, fall down, feel sick - a real laugh"

"PLEASURE HEADS MUST BURN" – THE BIRTHDAY PARTY
Dead Joe/A Dead Song Junkyard/Release The Bats/Pleasure Heads/Big Jesus Trashcan/Nick The Stripper/Hamlet/Pleasure Avalanche/Six Inch Gold Blade/Wild World/Six Strings/Sonnys Burning/She's Hit.

"PERVERTED BY LANGUAGE BIS" – THE FALL
Wings/Totally Wired/Kicker Conspiracy/Hex-Strife ad. Eat Y'Self Fitter/The Confidence Of Glasgance/Tempo House/Man Whose Head Expanded/Smile/Drago -H. Priest

VIDEO RELEASES

DV1 "Doublevision Presents" – CABARET VOLTAIRE
Diskono/Obsession/Trash Pt. 1/Badge Of Evil/Nag Nag Nag/Eddie's Out/Landslide/Photophobia/Trash Pt. 2/Seconds Too Late/Extract From Johnny YesNo/Walls Of Jericho/This Is Entertainment/Moscow.
90 minute programme.

DV2 THROBBING GRISTLE
"The Recording of Heathen Earth and Live at Oundle Boys' School."
110 minute programme.

DV3 "Johnny YesNo" – CABARET VOLTAIRE/PETE CARE
Johnny YesNo (22 minute film)/Johnny Version/Hallucination Sequence/Invocation/Loosen The Clamp/Yashar-Dance Mix

DV5 "Elemental Seventh" – CTI (CHRIS & COSEY)
Temple Bar/Dancing Ghosts/Meeting Mr Evans/Sidereal plus three more

DV6 "Seven Songs" – 23 SKIDOO
Seven Songs/Kundalini/Tranquilliser Pts. 1&2/Lock Groove plus six more.

SEVERED HEADS
Dead Eyes Open/Petrol/Lower Than The Grave/Nightsong
35 minute programme.

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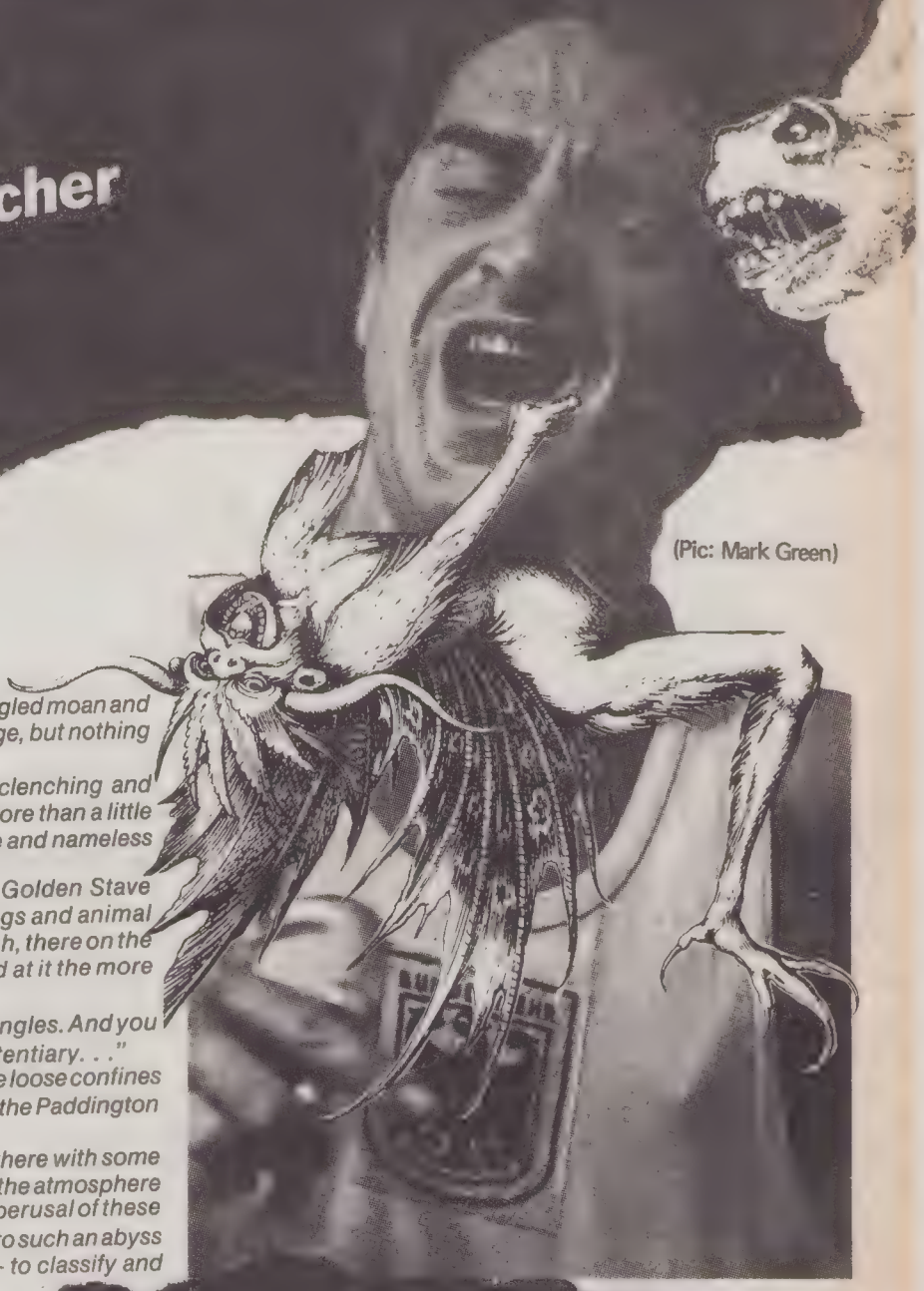
SINGLES FROM BEYOND THE THRESHOLD

. . . As dismembered by master butcher IGNATIUS JONES



(Pic: Mark Green)

T was a foul and pestilential night — and the weather wasn't too good either — when I heard a half-gurgled moan and a faint rapping at my door. It was with some trepidation that I drew the bolts and raised the drawbridge, but nothing could have prepared me for the sight that met my eyes.

Editors look rather unappealing at the best of times, but the sight of Phil Stafford — gnarled fingers clenching and unclenching, his tongue lolling spastic to one side, choking incoherently in a pool of his own saliva — was more than a little disturbing. His eyes, little red coals burning through a jar of cold fat, looked like they had gazed on obscene and nameless horrors (I was looking at YOU at the time, Igantius — Ed.)

"Good God, man!" I said, grasping his tongue and pulling him to his feet. "Compose yourself. The Golden Stave backlash wasn't that *bad." But these calm and soothing words helped him not. With constant shudderings and animal whimperings, he kept pointing towards the doorway in paroxysms of loathing and terror. And sure enough, there on the step was a greasy burlap sack. Not only was it oozing a vile-smelling black slime, but the longer I looked at it the more positive I was, that, ever so faintly, it was writhing. . .*

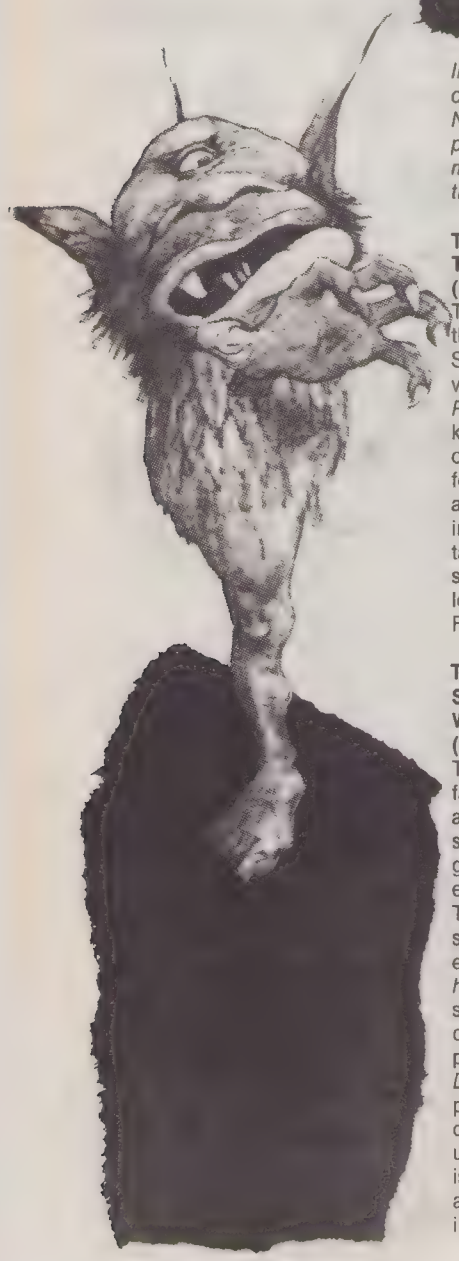
"Coward!" I spat. "Craven wimp! You just can't bring yourself to look at, let alone listen to, last month's singles. And you think you can unload them on me, huh? If it wasn't for your sick mother, and your sister in the penetentiary. . ."

But he was oblivious; while I was berating him, a particularly loathsome Brian Cadd single had crept from the loose confines of its filthy receptacle and buried itself like Alien *in the bridge of his nose. "Well," I mumbled, "don't go down to the Paddington Markets like that or next week everybody will by wearing one."*

Stepping over his convulsing body, I grabbed the guilty gunny sack and dragged it into my laboratory, where with some difficulty I manhandled it into my electrified specimen cage. Only then did I risk exposing its foul contents to the atmosphere we all perforce must share. Lord! What an evil and degraded menagerie confronted me! Even the quickest perusal of these noisome pieces of vinyl made clear what had reduced this normally kind-hearted and semi-literate individual to such an abyss of blithering imbecility. So then, I steel my resolve and proceed — in the name of science and morality — to classify and perhaps warn the world of these aberrant horrors. . .

Dwellers In The Void

In the blind recesses below the earth — where the Unholy Name of Yig is sacred — dwells Azathoth, the Blind Idiot God of Nethermost Confusion, while above his ministers still bellow and prance around cliche-topped monoliths in lonely places, and make records like this: so mind-numbingly dull you wonder why they bothered.



THE STAPLE SINGERS
This Is Our Night/The Turning Point (Epic)
Their mouths full of earth, their eyes the husks of beetles. Last year the Staples delighted us with a superlative version of the Talking Heads' *Slippery People*, and I looked forward with a kind of manic glee to their latest offering. Well, more fool me. Anyone for some musical valium? Everything about this record is tired and sleep-inducing. Sink back into your primeval tar pits, and take that awful bass sound like the intestinal rumblings of a long dead behemoth with you. If this is Funk, wake me when it's over.

TINA TURNER
Show Some Respect/Let's Pretend We're Married (Interfusion)
Tina Turner is living testimony to the fact that advanced age and an appalling hairdo are not obstacles to a successful comback, if you possess a great voice and the song is good enough. Unfortunately, this one ain't. Though the introductory wah-guitar is so similar to *Nutbush* you almost expect to hear *'Church-house, gin house. . .'* come screeching out of the speakers, the song immediately gets ordinary and stays ordinary. The production, like the rest of *Private Dancer*, is excellent, but the song plods on to an early and unmourned demise. The B-side, a live, no-fang-unbared version of the Prince number, is fun in a sweaty way, but it seems apropos to nothing and rather irrelevant.

VISAGE
Beat Boy/Beat Boy (Dub) (Polydor)
What a confusing little amphibian! Hopping about with no visible hook, not really knowing whether it's suffering from post-industrial malaise or a weird desire to have its bottom spanked at nightclubs, a standard technofunk backing track with pretentiously opaque lyrics, and a melody with a disturbing tendency to sound like *Radio Gaga*. Hell, I don't know; I can't tell its asshole from its eyeball.

THE POOKAH MAKES 3
Take It Back/I Can Do Anything (TEN)
This is a very *nice* record. It should sell lots of toothpaste. Next to these nellies, Wham! are subversive and probably cause cavities. Oh. . . *vapid* would be a nice thing to say about the B-side. (And don't take the genus of my favourite 6ft White Rabbit in vain, d'you hear?)

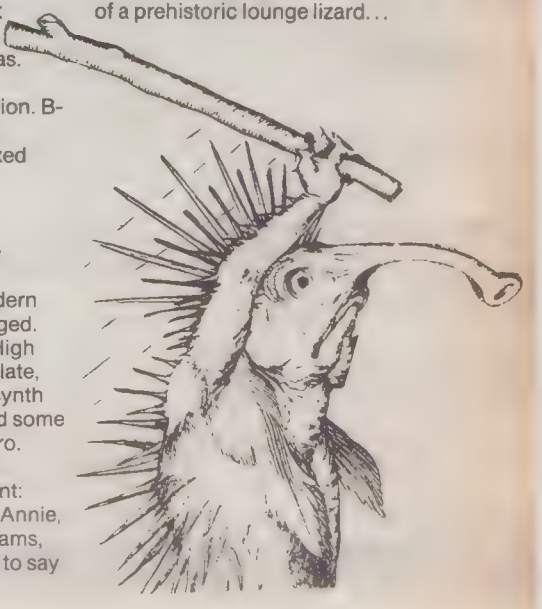
Unwilling Slaves of the Yawning Sepulchre

I found these poor unfortunates cowering wretched in a far corner of the sack, tainted by the evil they were surrounded with, yet not completely part of it. Perhaps your prayers, kind reader, will aid them in their slough of despair.

VANITY
Pretty Mess (both sides) (Motown)
You know she actually wrote the words to this song? God, I wish I could write lyrics like that. (For those of you who can't actually believe your ears, they're printed on the sleeve.) Now we all know that a certain Prince Nelson Rogers has never chosen his consorts for their intellectual accomplishments, but Vanity — even though now discarded by the diminutive demiurge — shows that she learnt something from the experience: even people of limited mental capacity can make records. And what vocal technique, what dramatic range! — she makes Madonna sound like Maria Callas. Still, like Prince, this record is appealing in a weird, dippy fashion. B-side is the same record with the singing removed, which is a mixed blessing.

JODY
Where The Boys Are/My House (Mercury)
This is a pleasing morsel of modern pop, well written and well arranged. The lyrics — while not exactly High Art — are inoffensive and articulate, there are some great distorted synth "guitar" things in the chorus and some charming oriental shit in the intro. However, I think there's a slight problem in the image department: Jody looks like Sade, sings like Annie, and dresses like Wendy O. Williams, which could confuse the public to say the least.

KING
Love And Pride/Don't Stop (CBS)
It's hard to take anyone in yellow tartan knickerbockers very seriously: it's even harder to be impartial about someone who has brazenly stolen your hairstyle. Yet I must admit the man can sing, he's got a neat bassplayer, good, straightforward production and a decent shot at those pestilential arbiters of musical success, the Charts. But after many and repeated listenings I can't help but find this hollow and unconvincing, too neat and too tailored. And Paul King, tonsorial thief that he is, reminds me of a prehistoric lounge lizard. . .



The Squirming Hordes Of Yog-Sothoth

So concerned had I been with these poor, pathetic deformities that I momentarily turned my back on the remaining denizens of that accursed sack — a carelessness that would cost me dearly. Suddenly, with a wild merciless keening, a revolting sound I dare not put on paper, a noxious host of vicious little monstrosities leapt ravening from their prison, hurling me to the ground. The pure unadulterated horror of it! They propelled themselves by means of tentacles projecting from their nostrils, on something like feet which hung limply from their slobbering mouths, and on the obscenely elongated lobes of their ears. In a trice they had scattered to every corner and cranny of the room, where they chattered and hissed malevolently. My most daunting task had begun...

KOOL & THE GANG
Misled/Rollin'
(Delite)
This record has all the slushy nastiness of a cloven bladder, and puts to shame Hell's foulest enormities. How could they let me down like this? In a breathtaking metamorphosis, Kool & Co have turned into *Foreigner* of all things — right down to the crustacean rhythm section, stereo power chords and delicate intellectual thrust which have always endeared me to that particular band. Being a negro is no excuse for lyrics of such hair-frizzling fatuousness. The pale, blotchy pun of the title (*Misled*/Miss Lead), is constantly belaboured with such gobbets of lyrical turpitude as: *'She's as heavy As A Chevy...'* And how about this gem: *'I've got a whole lot of money/a whole lot of love Just for you/Wanna know something funny/but I wantcha for my honey Yes I do...'*

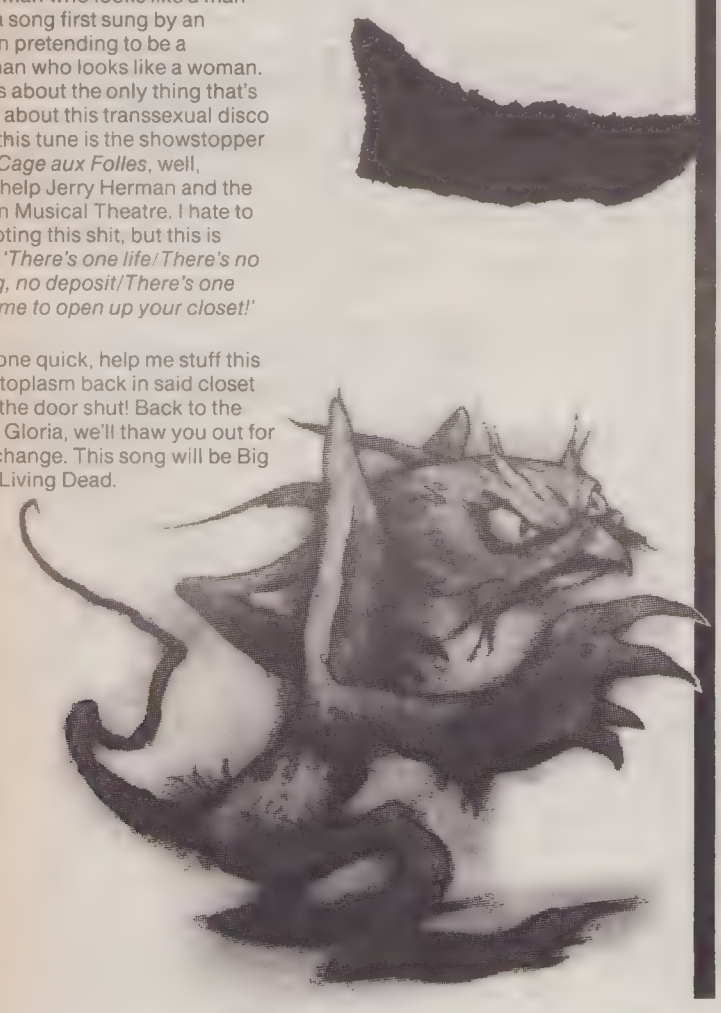
This is 1985, for God's sake. I hope they get devoured by Shub-Niggurath, the Black She-Goat of Woods with a Thousand Young, but I doubt even *she* could digest them.

GLORIA GAYNOR
I Am What I Am/More Than Enough
(Powderworks)
One of Gloria's greatest problems, apart from her choice of material, has been her unfortunate resemblance to a wharf labourer. In a dress. So here we have the amusing spectacle of a black woman who looks like a man singing a song first sung by an American pretending to be a Frenchman who looks like a woman. But that's about the only thing that's amusing about this transsexual disco mush. If this tune is the showstopper from *La Cage aux Folles*, well, Cthulhu help Jerry Herman and the American Musical Theatre. I hate to keep quoting this shit, but this is sublime: *'There's one life/There's no returning, no deposit/There's one life/It's time to open up your closet!'*

Someone quick, help me stuff this drab protoplasm back in said closet and nail the door shut! Back to the cryovac, Gloria, we'll thaw you out for the key change. This song will be Big with the Living Dead.

DAMIAN
Sha-Heza-Rade/Sabrina
(KAB)
This horrid little thing leapt braying, posturing and writhing from the loose folds of its sack and tormented me for at least five minutes, then turned into a colourless blob and rolled away. The Dusty Fleming of the Nether Regions, Damian has evolved a cloying vocal style which starts just flat enough to be really annoying, and then, at the merciful end of the "song", breaks into a lobotomised crooning which is downright torture. And all this over drum machine and neo-Spanish acoustic guitar! When I catch the joke, I'm going to tie its crippled legs together and expose it on the nearest jackal-infested hillside.

RICK JAMES
You Turn Me On/Fire And Desire
(Gordy)
This whole record is a potent argument for selective breeding, euthanasia and enforced sterilization. The A-side — with its lyrical non-content, tired seventies arrangements and insipid melody — is bad enough, but on the other side we hear Rick telling a former piece of fluff that due to her brief but benign influence, he is no longer a prize asshole. What sentiment! He must be an inspired and devout worshipper of the Great Old Ones, regularly sacrificing hamsters in black lurex caftan and hip boots. Oh Rick! This is the stuff of nightmare, and to hear it is to die...



Balm For The Haggard

It was only after many hours of madness-provoking labour that I managed to consign the majority of these perversions to the purifying flames, and only then did I discover the silver lining to Stafford's sack of sow's ears. Hiding in some greasy folds like Hope — the only thing left behind when Pandora unwittingly unleashed all the plagues of the world from her Box — I found these forlorn wraiths, quietly awaiting succour and salvation. For me, they were like a ray of sanity piercing the Dark Night of the Soul. Gratias Deo, et benedico vos, amici...

THE COMMODORES
Nightshift/I Keep Running
(Motown)
The month's most important record. The shimmering digital glory of its sounds, the feeling and intelligence which inform the lyrics, the lush melody and delicate arrangements — I could wax endless. This gorgeous tribute to Marvin Gaye and Jackie Wilson never lapses into drooling sentiment or mawkishness, and would be a winner solely for the Choir of Electronic Angels and the slickest guitar ever played on keyboards. Sure to prevail when the rest of this dross has succumbed to the kiss of the maggot and caress of the worm.

JEAN-MICHEL JARRE
Zoolook/Wooloomooloo
(Polydor)
A seething treasury of fetid and glistening sounds digitally confused for your pleasure. And a pleasure it is, too. Cunningly arranged, impeccably produced, this is currently Top Ten in Hyperborea, Xiccarph and the Dreaded Plateau of Leng. Great to play inside your swamp or water bed, it's an insidious primeval groove. The B-side is downright bestial!

THE PALE FOUNTAINS
Jean's Not Happening/Bicycle Thieves
(Virgin)
Huh? Who turned on the funny coloured lights? Just what did you do to that sugar cube? Why are we veering between a schizoid post-eighties Doors and the more accessible moments of the Chocolate Watch Band? Who's that man with the paisley heart on this sleeve? Where are those great Eleanor Rigby strings coming from? Where's Jean? (I had fun, *you* will, and line honours for the week's best song-title.)

DAZZ BAND
Let It All Blow/Now That I Have You
(Motown)
From the first hammer blow to the central nervous system, this record promises a treat — and Holy Mutha of Gawd, it delivers. The production is *large*; my headphones almost resigned in protest at the magnitude of the bottom end they were forced to contend with. They brush lyrical problems aside by simply not bothering, and as the chanted *'Let it all blow'* is matched admirably by the massive aural bludgeoning you receive from the rest of the track, what else can you ask for? (Except perhaps for the omission of the rather saccharine middle-8).

Unlike most of this week's pallid offerings, these guys sound like they've actually *heard* some of the more important developments in modern music (including Bill Laswell and Trevor Horn). Nobody is perfect, however: the B-side is syrupy black-face drivel...

OUTRO...

But hark! Do you hear that stark inhuman wail echoing through the forgotten chasms between the stars? I must go; you must excuse me. There's a full moon out and me and my old mate Nyarlathotep are going down to Suggoth's Bar for a cup of warm pig's blood. It's been a pleasure... until next issue, when we pounce upon the hapless victims who escaped us this time.

JIMMY BARNES AND EUROGLIDERS
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RAB 0008

SEEN and HEARD

Hmmm. . . No foolin'?!
STOP MAKING SENSE
Directed by Jonathan Demme
Starring the TALKING HEADS

Tina grins (Pic: Ian Greene/Camerartery)

'This ain't no party... This ain't no disco... This ain't no foolin' around...'?

Beg to differ... It's all of those and more. Not only does *Stop Making Sense* start to define the direction in which rock performance cinema (and video for that matter) should be heading, it also stands as an object lesson in stagecraft — for both band and camera crew.

Jonathan Demme's eye for detail matches the Heads' ear for sound as if he were the tenth member of the band — he's a complement to their ripping and twisted choreography, demonstrating an innate sympathy for their songs built up over the ten years Talking Heads have existed. He'd first seen, heard and been amazed by them in New York's Central Park back in 1978 — but it was their first record, *Psycho Killer* that turned his head originally.

So it is with *Stop Making Sense*, the endgame of a two-year collaboration between Demme, David Byrne and the rest of the Heads. Byrne is dropped onstage alone, mock-droning the dip lyrics of *Psycho Killer* with a toy beatbox tapping mild-manic time. The camera is fixed, unflinchingly voyeuristic — in perfect sympathy with Byrne's strangely compelling nerviness. The rest of the band arrive in almost seamless shifts over subsequent numbers — first the rhythm section, then the guitars, keyboards, synths, and percussion.

By *Slippery People*, backing vocalists Edna Holt and Lynn Mabry are swallowing the camera's eye, and the numbers have swollen to nine. The (digital) sound quality is immense; every member of the band can be discerned in a swirling mix of hands beating time, chopping strings 'n' synths, the cardiac throb of bass and drums... Byrne's fevered whine skates across the top, aerated by the soul swoops and hollers of Holt & Mabry Inc. (*redible*).

But *look* at these people — they're smiling so wide you wonder what the joke is, offsetting Byrne's runaway outpatient's dance schtick with some more traditional tomfoolery. Tina Weymouth darts, weaves and sidesteps between electric bass and keyboard, occasionally breaking out in a rush of secret laughter — even her facial muscles are mobile. Husband Chris Frantz drums like a medium-duty steamroller, crimping the arrangements airtight whilst also crinkling his face at every opportunity. What a serious joy to see a band have *this* good a time onstage!

Of the set list, versions of *Swamp*, *Life During Wartime* and *Girlfriend Is Better* excel — though how much of that is due to post-production tricks is open to guesswork. Occasionally the synch will wander ever so momentarily, but by now the party's got a life of its own anyway.

If you've seen the clip rushes from *Stop Making Sense*, then the spectacle of David Byrne's hyperactive neck jerking turtle-like in and out of his rollerdoor shellsuit won't strike you as unduly hilarious... Though it's still plenty cause to work your face muscles as frenetically as Byrne twists his polyurethane body. In contrast, seeing a song quite as fetchingly tender as *This Must Be The Place* performed live in quivering flesh-tones is pathos of a different persuasion — though it's not without its own oblique humour.

If Talking Heads could ever be deemed 'rockist', then it happens with an overlong dose of instrumental heroics in *Take Me To The River:* sure it's a standard, and one of the band's obligatory encores, but you begin to O.D. on 'being there' — especially from a seated position. Still, you're close enough to *feel* through them — be there in the realest sense, sharing the dull spots even! No need for distractingly obtuse cuts to blissed audience faces; you are the camera, you have a ticket to this show. No foolin' round at all...

PHIL STAFFORD

ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER PLACE
(Dendy Cinema, Sydney)

From Michael Radford, celebrated director of that drab dirge, *1984*, comes *Another Time, Another Place*, aptly named since it's another sort of film altogether — literate rather than literal, a lyrical elegy instead of a lengthy eulogy.

Superbly conceived and crafted in every department, it's a WW2 romance bringing together two intriguingly different protagonists: Janie (Phyllis Logan) is a young married Scots farmwoman, and Luigi (Giovanni Mauriello) an Italian prisoner-of-war stationed as a labourer in Janie's dreary, rain-drenched village during the autumn of 1944.

If this brief synopsis suggests some rose-tinted, whimsical, "roamin'-in-the-gloamin'" number along the cloyingly charming lines of *Local Hero* or even *Brigadoon*, then think again. For what Radford has skilfully fashioned from Jessie Kesson's semi-autobiographical novel is a powerfully moody, sturdily unsentimental work. Economically scripted (by Radford), it weaves a rich array of subtle sensations and vivid impressions around the currently fashionable theme of culture-clash.

Although critically acclaimed as "a plea for peace", this is *not* a heavy-handed Issue Film. Whilst alerting attention to both the obvious and understated misery of war, *Another Time, Another Place* focuses with fine vision and touch on people and their emotional needs — regardless of creed or class. This "feelings-first" approach still allows contemporaneous politics and history to flow through the narrative as an ever-present, sometimes intrusive undercurrent, which neither stagnates into a shallow decorative backdrop nor floods into drowning pools of Message and Meaning.

Both Logan and Mauriello give vibrant, sensitively tuned performances as they circle each other towards an irresistible rapport. He is all spontaneous impulse and flaming black-brown eyes, while she — in the more demanding role —responds with controlled yearning and spirited poise. Here is an altogether impressive feature film debut, registering a unique brand of radiant restraint and deceptively plain beauty that can be associated with the luminary likes of Vanessa Redgrave or Julie Harris. One wonders about the professional prospects for such a delicately refined talent in the current film production realm of witless sex-coms and mindless fantasy pix.

P. KEMP

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

THE RELATIVE BAND
(Performance Space, Redfern: April 18-20)

Free improvisers come in various types: there are the introvert and the extrovert; the serious and the humorous; the hyper-active and the placid; the acoustic and the visual; the amplified and the non-amplified; the consistent and the inconsistent; those also involved in other musics and those not; and so on and so forth. And, of course, there are those at various points in between these pairs of extremes.

All this came to mind when listening to and watching the latest ad hoc Relative Band, because all these extremes — and several stations in between — were present. And all this was exaggerated by the various countries of residence and/or origin involved. For most of the first night (Thursday), it looked as though the differences between the six musicians involved were irreconcilable, but on the next two nights things started happening. But first of all, the musicians involved...

Eugene Chadbourne brought with him one and a half electric guitars, two rakes, an amplifed plunger, a voice, and a seemingly endless supply of balloons and other toys. His use of borrowed amplifier was as unsubtle as his resultant facial expressions of shock; and he was liable to break into a pastiche of country music, rock or the blues at the slightest excuse or less.

Jim Denley played very fluent flute and alto saxophone. Equally effective variations on these 'official' instruments included a *flax* (his name for a flute with a saxophone mouthpiece, sounding like a clarinet); a flute minus any mouthpiece played with a trumpet embouchure; a flute mouthpiece minus the body; and a complete flute played *without blowing*.

Gillian McGregor's voice had remarkable ranges in both tone and timbre, and she used it with similar sensitivity and imagination. The use of her face was reminiscent of Buster Keaton — and the only time she moved any of her body was in a very slow mime, at times when she chose to be silent.

Steve Moore played the soprano saxophone, and showed himself to be well aware of the two modern giants of the instrument — Steve Lacy and Evan Parker. However, he also showed he is finding his own path somewhere between the two. His use of bass register growls was something that I had not heard before from the instrument.

David Moss borrowed a standard drum kit, and added some deep-fried cymbals, electronic gadgetry, toys and a remarkable voice. He plunged into the music head first — on whatever he could get his hands, feet and larynx on — with the abandon of a Roland Kirk. His drumming consisted mainly of unlikely repetitive patterns, while the amazing variety of sounds he obtained from everything else were often used as a bizarre backdrop to the rest of the happenings.

Jon Rose spent most of the time playing his home-made, 19-string amplified cello — helping to push the music from below, or else providing a droning anchor. Every so often though, he would come out on top with some fast movement on his amplified violin, which, like every instrument he works on, is *very* different to an off-the-shelf model.

So how did this motley crew manage to make music together, given that several of the musicians involved had not played with each other at all previously? As I said, the sextet performance on the Thursday was largely a loud demonstration of incompatibilities. But surprisingly, on Friday the music started coming together. The evening ended with something that was inconceivable the day before — a long, quiet section in which all six musicians participated. As for Saturday, it was even better and more together. The three successive evenings were a remarkable example of how good improvisers inevitably learn to listen to each other and recognise how they can fit into a given ensemble.

For someone like myself, who usually finds a sextet to be too large for this sort of music (or just about any other), it was particularly heartening to hear some solo, duo and trio performances in each concert. The highlight of these on Thursday was Gillian McGregor's imaginative singing over David Moss's minimal percussion and mumblings.

Then on Friday: the "acoustic" trio of Jim Denley, Gillian McGregor and Steve Moore — a needed respite from the prevailing sound of amplifiers; a remarkable stand-up jabberwocky vocal by Moss with outstanding 'cello accompaniment by Jon Rose; and a stunning soprano sax solo from Moore that was eventually augmented by Moss, bowing a toy electric guitar.

And on Saturday: the two horn players, and later Denley and Rose, being booted along by the drummer; Gillian McGregor managing not to lose her bearings over the assistance that Eugene Chadbourne supplied on a borrowed acoustic guitar; and an outrageous sendup of the genres of rock, country and the blues by Chadbourne and Moss. The evening ended as the sextet evolved into a busy McGregor/Moss vocal duo that showed them both to be experts in talking without words. And that's exactly what the best music does!

MARTIN DAVIDSON

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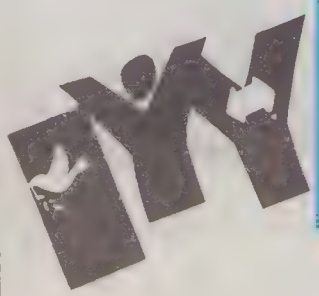

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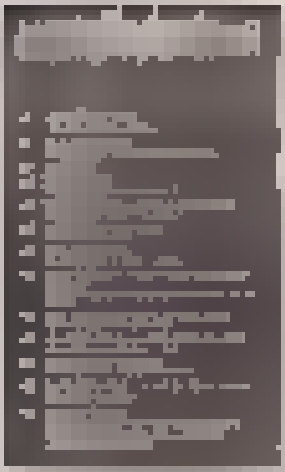

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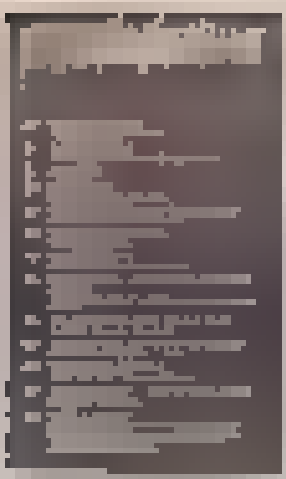


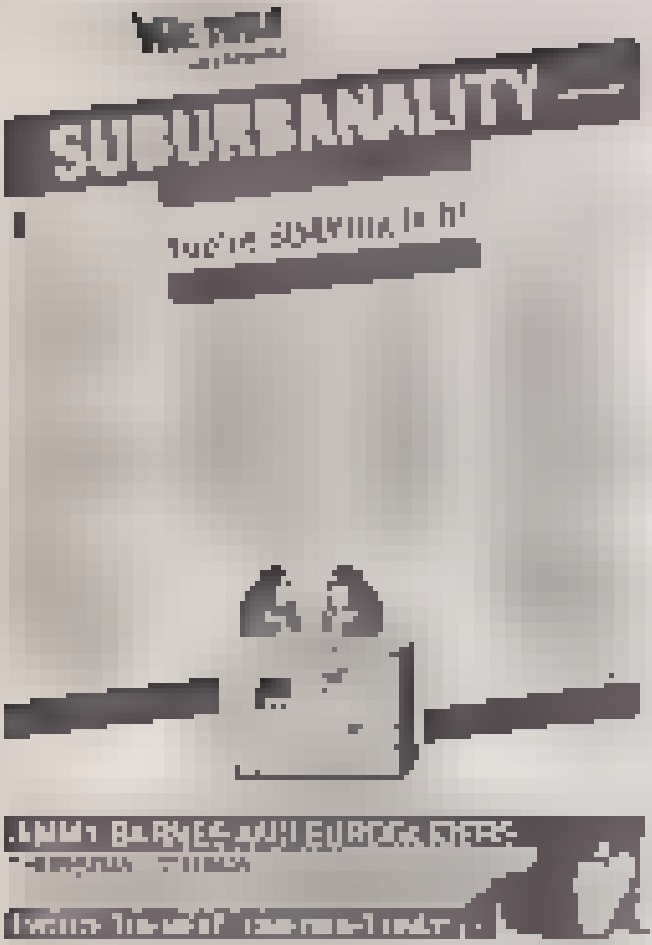
Invasion Force

NUCLEAR ARMS

JLLCAR SAPM

Transit Lounge

Transit Lounge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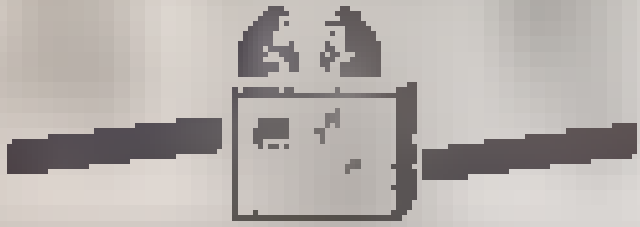

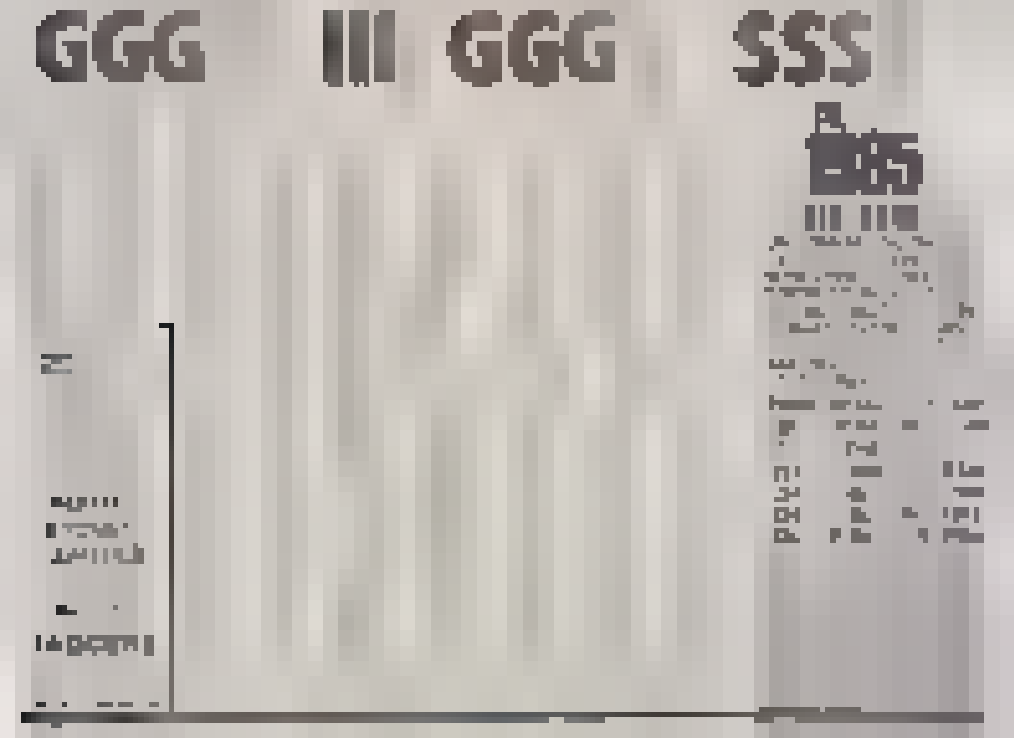
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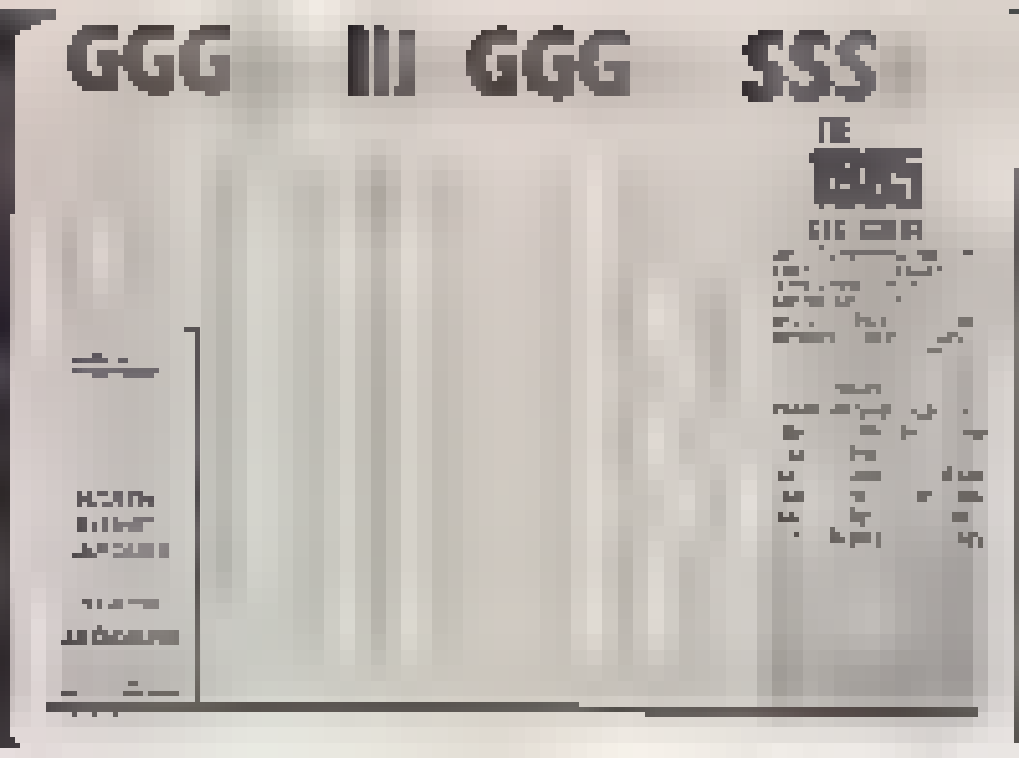
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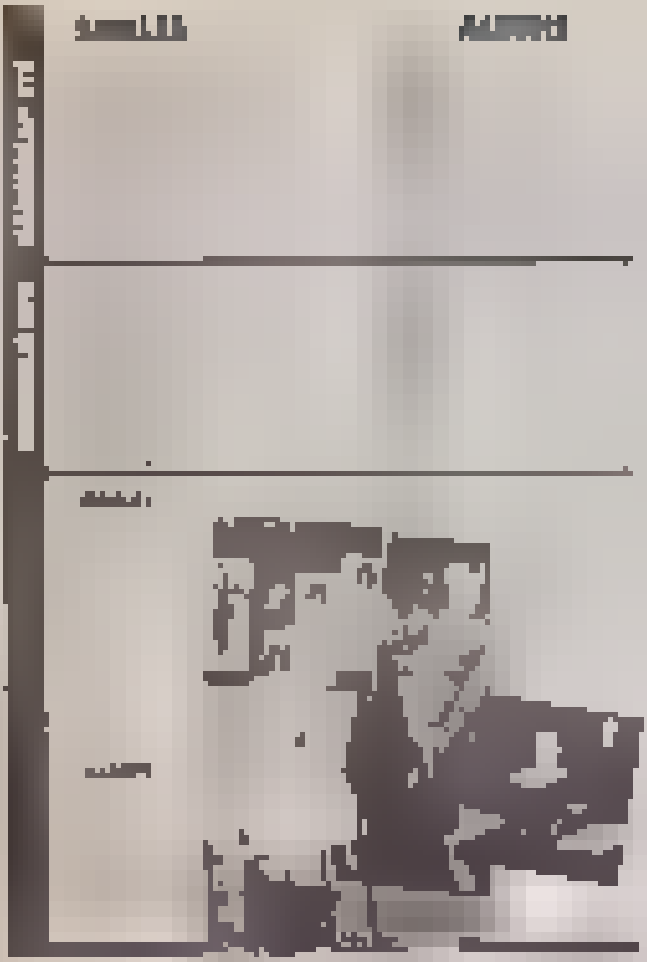

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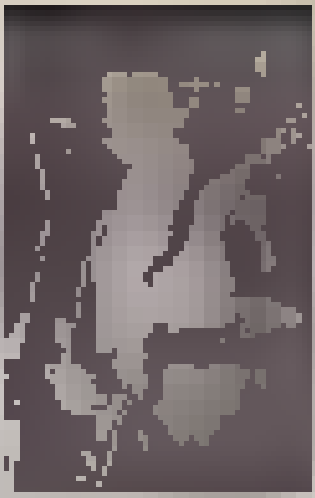

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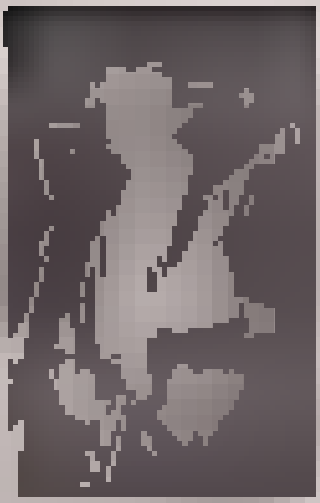


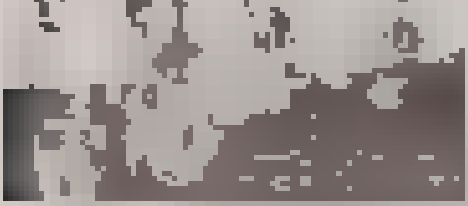
TINY TOWN

TINY TOWN

BIST A DRUMMER

GET INTO

THE MILKY BAR KIDS



THE MILKY-BAR KIDS

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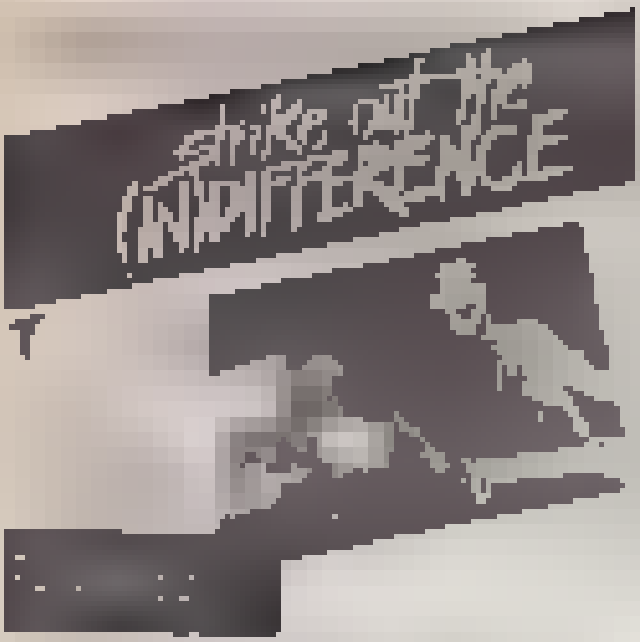
Strike out the
(IN)DIFFERENCE

STRIKE OUT THE
INDIFFERENCE

Welcome

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Pacing

Human
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THE STRANGLERS

NOT-SO NASTIES

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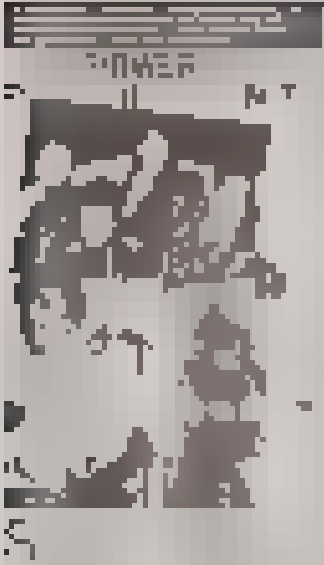

"WHAT CHA DOIN' NOW?"

"WHATCHA DOIN NOW ?"

SEEN&

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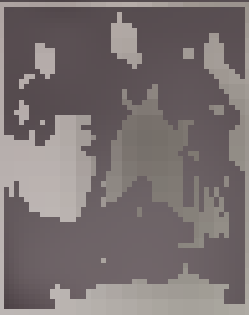
JOINT BEARINGS AND SURFACES

SEEN HEARD



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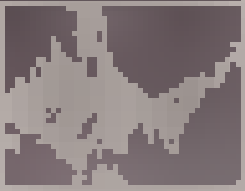

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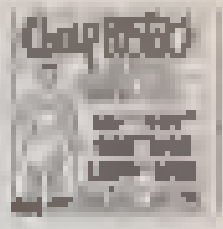

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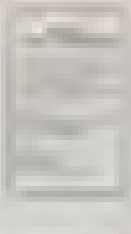

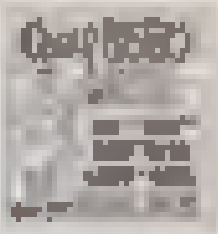

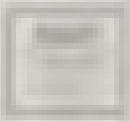

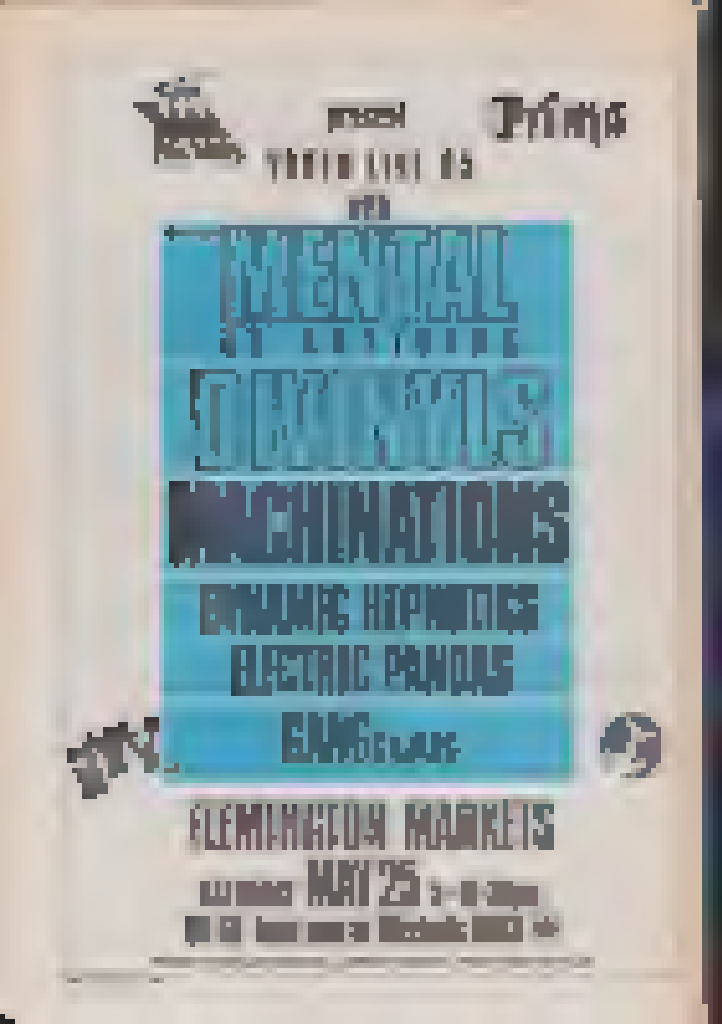
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